DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 583 HE 035 345

AUTHOR	McGuire, Margaret Ann
TITLE	An Analysis of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program and the Effect on Graduate's Perceptions of Preparedness To Teach. A Record of Study.
PUB DATE	2001-08-00
NOTE	127p.; Ed.D. Dissertation, Texas A&M University.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Education; Graduate Surveys; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Preservice Teachers; Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; *Satisfaction
IDENTIFIERS	*Sam Houston State University TX

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect the educational preparation curriculum had on graduates of Sam Houston State University's Educator Preparation Program as they began their professional careers. The population was drawn from all graduates receiving certification in elementary education from 1997 through spring 2000. A questionnaire was sent to 50% of the 909 identified graduates, and 196 responded. Sam Houston State University graduates were generally pleased with their overall experience in the Educator Preparation Program. There was a strong positive perception of satisfaction from graduates of 2000, 1999, and 1997 in their overall preparedness to teach. Findings do suggest that all areas of the Educator Preparation Program need to be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis, and the program faculty and staff should use the program's exit interviews to evaluate student perceptions of preparedness to teach. The establishment of a mentoring/outreach program is also recommended. Appendixes contain the cover letter, study questionnaire, and a follow-up request. (Contains 18 tables and 106 references.) (SLD)

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM AND THE EFFECT ON GRADUATE'S PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH

A Record of Study

by

MARGARET ANN MCGUIRE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Major Subject: Educational Administration

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August 2001

Major Subject: Educational Administration

ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program and the Effect on Graduate's Perception of Preparedness to Teach. (August 2001)

Margaret Ann McGuire, B.A., University of South Carolina;

M.Ed., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Maynard J. Bratlien

The purpose of this study was to examine what effect the educational preparation curriculum had on graduates of Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as they began their professional teaching careers. The population was drawn from all graduates receiving certification in elementary education from 1997 through spring 2000. A questionnaire was sent to 50 % of the 909 identified graduates with 196 responding. In addition to requesting demographic information, the questionnaire sought to obtain their perceptions of how well the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program had prepared them to teach and to identify what course work had been most helpful.

Major research findings included:

1. Sam Houston State University graduates were generally pleased with their overall experience in the Educator Preparation Program.
2. There was a strong positive perception of satisfaction from graduates of 2000, 1999, and 1997 with their overall feeling of preparedness to teach.

Recommendations:

1. All areas of the Educator Preparation Program need to be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis to insure the needs of the educational community and Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program graduates continue to be met.
2. The Educator Preparation Program and faculty should use the information gathered through the existing exit interviews at the completion of the student teaching semester for evaluation of the perceptions of preparedness to teach.
3. A mentoring/outreach program should be established to support the graduates of the Educator Preparation Program at Sam Houston State University.

Recommendations for Further Research:

1. This study should be replicated with graduates of Educator Preparation Programs whose focus is secondary and/or middle school students.
2. A new study should be implemented that examines the specific issue of course work contained in Educator Preparation Programs.
3. A longitudinal study of graduates should be conducted in yearly increments to measure the changing needs of educators and the educational community.

DEDICATION

This record of study is dedicated to my family for all of their support.

To my husband John for his endless hours of proof reading, cleaning and painting so I could write. You are my best friend.

To my sons, John Samuel, Charlie and Michael for always making me feel like I could do this.

To my daddy, Samuel Martin and my late mother, Evelyn Martin who instilled in me the knowledge that doing my best was always most important.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This endeavor could not be have been accomplished without the guidance and support of many people.

My chair, Dr. Maynard Bratlien, who made me continually improve and rise to the next level, in spite of myself. You were always kind, patient and understanding as my life and professional goals changed directions.

Dr. Stephen Stark, who never accepted anything less than perfection.

Dr. Clifford Whetten, who believed in my ability and shared his time and expertise to make my dream come true.

Dr. William Nash, who showed me that there is a little bit of gifted in all of us. Through his class and guidance, I was able to realize that, although I marched to a different drummer for much of the time, it is okay!

Dr. John Huber, who took a chance on me, sight unseen and Dr. Erin Johnson, who made identifying my population so uncomplicated. Your support and confidence that I could finish this record of study has been something that I could hold on to when times were rough.

I am also very appreciative of the other faculty, staff, and my students at Sam Houston State University who offered their expertise, friendship and respect during this time. Your encouragement and support through this record of study experience was wonderful. You celebrated my successes and supported me as I hit those inevitable bumps along the way. If I did not say it loud enough at the time, thank you.

Cindy Gordon and Beverly Murphy, who allowed me to neglect them as I researched and wrote, yet still remained my friends. Your understanding and support of my dream is the measure of true friendship. As I complete this journey, it is definitely time for "road trips"!

Finally, I would like to thank my family. It is said that with family, anything is possible. My husband John, our sons John Samuel, Charlie, and Michael all gave me the time and support that I needed to complete this journey. My dream became their dream for me and they each did whatever they could to make it happen.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

To become a teacher has always been a lofty aspiration that carried with it the high ideals of participants wanting to make a difference in the life of a child (Latham, 1998). While the pay was low and the hours were long, people still carried the desire to teach. Yet, one needs only to read a newspaper or watch television to see that educators are facing new challenges in today's schools, challenges that were beyond the realm of understanding when many teachers went through existing teacher education programs (McBee, 1999). Metal detectors grace the doors that welcome students into the world of education. Signs are prominently displayed stating guns are not allowed. Many metropolitan school districts have their own police forces to keep order on their campuses (Kalb, Davenport, & Foote, 1999). Teachers are frustrated with going to school to teach when their day revolves around everything but teaching (Bradford, 1999). Clearly, the deterioration of schools, students, and society have escalated to the point where they must be addressed because of their direct impact on the state of education in the United States and the future of our culture (Bracey, 1991).

In 1996, The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future published the findings of its two-year investigation into the educational challenges

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The style and format for this record of study follows that of the *Journal of Educational Research*

facing the United States (1996). The panel was composed of a group of 26 experts from the field of education and was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

They concluded that the reform of elementary and secondary education would depend upon a double pronged approach. First, the teaching profession must be restructured toward increasing teachers' knowledge to meet the demands they face in the classroom. Second, schools must be redesigned to support high-quality teaching and learning. The report offers a master plan for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and rewarding excellent educators so that all schools might have a caring, qualified teacher for every child (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

In Texas, the call for restructuring the education process is being addressed on many levels. The first step of this complex process involves the development of standards for all content areas of certification. Standards are defined as what a beginning educator should know and be able to do for each content area and teaching level. Teacher preparation programs will have to reconfigure their curriculum so that new teachers have a deeper understanding of content area, individual student learning styles, and how children think and construct knowledge. This information will be aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and be used as a basis for new Examinations for the Certification of Educators in Texas (Certification, 2000).

Much has been written about teacher retention, job satisfaction, and what teachers need to be successful (Andrews, 1997; Grasmick & Leak, 1997; Hummel & Stom, 1987; Marson & Pigge, 1987). While there have been efforts put forth in raising

salaries across the United States, little else has been consistently established to attract highly qualified and competent people to the field of education. Many teachers must deal with the public's somewhat skewed view of teaching, a high incidence of less than optimal working conditions, and the lack of prestige for their chosen profession (Lucas, 1997). Clearly, the importance and depth of the commitment that teachers bring to education needs to be better articulated to the public.

Statement of the Problem

As the teacher preparation program reform movement begins to be addressed under the new certification requirements issued by the state, information regarding the effectiveness of current teacher preparation curriculum must be examined (Grasmick & Leak, 1997). Many proponents of educational reform hold the position that teacher preparation programs have not kept pace with the needs of the current school population. In this viewpoint, preparation programs are still structured to meet the needs of K-12 students from the past who no longer exist (Ambach, 1996; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995). A restructuring of the ideological framework behind the current college course requirements must be made to more realistically align what is taught at the university with what is actually needed by students in the elementary and secondary schools. Teachers need more opportunities to observe, hypothesize, test, and reflect on ways to reach children who may have cultural backgrounds different from their own (McBee, 1998). In addition, instructional pedagogy must be developed that meets the needs of the diverse learners of the twenty first century (Ambach, 1996). As John Goodlad (1990) states "there can be no universal education of our young people,

however, unless the education of those who are to teach them is completely redesigned" (p. 42).

Purpose of the Study

This study examined what effect the educational preparation curriculum had on recent graduates of Sam Houston State University as they began their professional teaching careers. Additional purposes were to evaluate the current strengths and weaknesses of the educator preparation program at Sam Houston State University as it began the restructuring process leading to compliance with requirements mandated for the Early Childhood-Grade 4 Generalist Certificate that is to be implemented by the 2002-2003 academic year.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed:

1. What is the level of satisfaction with the content area preparation received, as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
2. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation of how to respond to diverse populations as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
3. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation for developing professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

4. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation received in instructional methodology as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
5. What is the level of satisfaction with specific coursework contained within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?
6. What is the level of satisfaction with the overall program within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

Operational Definitions

Collaborative Skills: having the ability to interact and communicate appropriately with all families, colleagues and other professionals in the school community.

Current Texas Standards for Certification: the current certificate qualifies an individual to teach grades 1-8. With the Early Childhood Education endorsement an individual may teach pre-k through grade eight.

Diversity: the knowledge of how to plan and adapt lessons to address students' varied personal and social characteristics including those related to ethnicity, gender, language background, and special needs.

Early Childhood-Grade 4 Generalist Certificate: A Texas teacher certificate which will be effective beginning September 1, 2002. All teachers who desire to teach students in fourth grade and below. This will include pre-k and kindergarten.

Educator Preparation Curriculum: A program at Sam Houston State University which

Includes 66 hours of Academic foundation courses, a 48-hour (minimum) interdisciplinary Academic Studies major, and 18 hours of Professional Education courses, including student teaching.

Educator Preparation Program: A program of studies at Sam Houston State University within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction whose primary purpose is to prepare students to become exemplary teachers.

Graduates' Perception: the understanding of how students' expectations for knowledge and skills were met by the educator preparation program at Sam Houston State University.

Instructional Methodology: the art of teaching educational pedagogy

Level of Satisfaction; the degree to which the graduates of Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program felt that they had been prepared to teach

Overall Program: the Educator Preparation Program as presented by Sam Houston State University.

Preparedness To Teach: the perception of the graduates as to how they had been adequately and effectively trained to address the needs and expectations of their students and school.

Professional Communicator: One who is able to communicate in a variety of formats including electronically, orally to individuals or groups, and all forms of written language.

Sam Houston State University: a four year university located in Huntsville, Texas. This university has a current enrollment of over 12,000 students.

Specific Coursework: courses offered within the elementary education degree plan that form the core of the Educator Preparation Program curriculum.

Teacher Certification: Licenses to teach issued by the individual states in accordance to their standards and requirements for teacher preparation.

Assumptions

1. The researcher was impartial in collecting and analyzing all data.
2. The instrument used in this study measured the effect of teacher preparation on teacher satisfaction.
3. The respondents surveyed objectively and honestly answered the questions posed to them regarding the study.
4. The interpretation of the data collected has accurately reflected that which was intended.

Limitation

The scope of this study was limited to graduates from Sam Houston State University with elementary certification from 1997 through spring 2000.

Significance of the Study

Academic success for all students should be the goal of every educator (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The majority of the initial research into school reform dealt with student issues, and little was done concerning teacher preparation (Lucas, 1997). For

students to be successful, they must have teachers who have been prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences which children bring with them to school (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995).

This study examined what effect the teacher preparation program at Sam Houston State University has had on their graduates. By demonstrating a positive or negative relationship between what is currently offered within the teacher preparation program and the usefulness of the curriculum to its graduates, Sam Houston State University will be better able to address the needs and concerns of its participants as the teacher preparation program begins its restructure to meet new state certification criterion (Gideonse, 1989).

Contents of the Record of Study

The Record of Study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations and significance of the study. Chapter II provides a review of the literature. Chapter III outlines the methodology and procedures followed. Chapter IV contains an analysis of the data collected in the study. Chapter V summarizes findings and presents the researcher's recommendations and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is a review of past and current literature that provides information and support for this study. The literature review is organized into six sections. The first section sets the historical foundation for teacher education in the United States. The rich traditions of teacher preparation at Sam Houston State University are traced and examined. In section two, the effectiveness of current teacher preparation programs across the United States will be examined. The third section will identify and define the new and diverse population currently present in elementary and secondary schools. Factors of race, gender, and poverty as they affect teachers will be examined. The fourth section will focus on student achievement and what effect teachers have on that achievement. Section five will address what effect the course work component required in teacher preparation programs has on teachers' feeling of preparedness. The sixth component will exam external and internal factors that contribute to teacher attrition.

Historical Perspective

Teacher preparation programs and teachers have a long and diverse history in our country. Seventeenth and eighteenth century teachers ranged from the barely literate to those possessing a college degree. Their common bond was that teaching was considered to be a part-time or temporary occupation to supplement one's income until they found their true vocation (Goodlad, 1991; Urban, 1990). Not surprisingly, the lack

of social standing accorded teachers, the inadequate salaries they commanded, the constant scrutiny they were under, and the almost impossible character requirements consequently made the tenure of the early teachers almost always brief. In addition, females had the further restrictive perceptions that formal education was wasted on them, that they were unsuitable to teach older students, and were expected to resign upon marriage (Lucas, 1997).

In the early part of the 1800's it became an increasingly popular mandate that it was imperative for all persons, regardless of social class or position in society , to have had some type of free and public education so that they could participate intelligently in the affairs of state (Lucas, 1997). Horace Mann, first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, was a vocal proponent of the common school concept. While the intent was admirable, there was a dismal lack of teachers with any type of preparation available to staff these schools, especially male teachers. Because it was felt that women were better fitted to teach young children in the lower grades, it became a common practice to identify a teenage female student preparing to leave the lower grades and hire her to take over the teaching of those below her. Her suitability came through her gender, willingness to work for lower wages than a man, and the fact that she had gone through the levels of common school that she was expected to teach. Little regard was given to her level of preparedness to perform her duties (Ducharme and Ducharme, 1996; Hewes, 1990). This left the available male teachers to fill the vacancies at the secondary level. Clearly, this was a poor solution to the lack of teacher training and needs of the common schools (Urban, 1990).

As common schools were being established, the issue of teacher preparation was also being discussed and debated by Horace Mann, James Carter, Alexander D. Bache, and Calvin Stowe (Lucas, 1997). It was felt that if common schools were the answer to the education of the people, then there must be publicly supported schools to help ensure a supply of well-trained teachers for those schools (Urban, 1990). Horace Mann felt that a career in teaching had to be raised to a higher level of professionalism in the community in order to recruit a more highly educated and more stable work force (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Grow-Maienza, 1996). The concept of public "normal" schools was offered as the solution to accomplishing those goals. The term "normal" as an appellation for teacher-training institutions derived via the French from the Latin, *norma*, meaning conforming to a "rule, pattern, or model." Hence the intended connotation was a place imparting the "norms" or "rules" for exemplary teaching practice. By 1875, there were state normal schools in 25 states (Lucas, 1997).

Normal schools grew in conjunction with common school growth. While the normal school's original purpose was to provide a steady supply of teachers for the common schools, throughout the years its mission became two fold. Originally, the curriculum for the normal schools had been based upon technical concerns as embodied in pedagogical theory. This was what future teachers needed to address the needs of the common school students; however, due to the many levels of educational preparedness of these future teachers, normal schools began to offer academic classes to supplement the knowledge of their least prepared students (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Urban, 1990). With academic subjects in place, normal schools began to admit students who were not

seeking to teach, but to advance their education beyond the level of the common school. Normal schools took on the role of the modern day high schools in offering classes on a post-elementary level. From there it was a natural transition to post secondary class offerings with many normal schools evolving into teachers' colleges (Ducharme and Ducharme, 1996).

In Texas, the establishment and progress of the common and normal school system paralleled what was happening in the more populated eastern part of the United States. On April 21, 1879, Texas Governor Oran M. Roberts authorized the establishment of Sam Houston Normal Institute. With its 110 students and four faculty members, it became the first teacher training school west of the Mississippi (SHSU, 1996). During the following four decades, instruction was offered in the natural sciences, agriculture, home economics, manual training, geography, sociology, and foreign languages. The curriculum was expanded from two to four years, and the first baccalaureate degree was awarded in 1911.

A name change occurred in 1923, and the school became Sam Houston State Teachers College. Two years later, the college was admitted to membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as an accredited institution of higher learning. Sam Houston State continues to hold this accreditation to this day. While the focus of the school was always and continued to be teacher preparation, Sam Houston State Teachers College continued to expand its programs to meet the needs of the people of Texas and added graduate programs in 1936. Due to the growing and diverse populations and curriculum being introduced, the Texas Legislature changed the name to

Sam Houston State College in 1965 to reflect the new developments at the school. Again in 1969, the Texas Legislature changed the school's name to Sam Houston State University, reflecting the rapid increase in enrollment of students with diversified backgrounds, interests, and aspiration, which necessitated continuous examination of programs, faculty and facilities and the increasingly significant number of graduate degrees being conferred (SHSU, 1998).

Effectiveness of Current Teacher Preparation

Much has been written concerning the condition of education in the United States during the past century (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Friedman, Brinlee et al., 1980). The bulk of these reports, books, and articles have been directed at school reform, with only a small percentage addressing the issue of teacher education (Goodlad, 1994). In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared the United States "A Nation at Risk" because of high drop out rates, poor achievement scores, and graduates unable to read, write, or understand basic mathematical concepts (A Nation at Risk, 1983). This document has been considered by some to be the clarion call needed to turn the spotlight on educational reform. Unfortunately, while its message was critical, the complexity of such a huge and abstract issue was overlooked. Rather than focusing on any one component, the report seemed to take a shotgun approach as to what was wrong with education. With so many concerns being brought to the forefront and a myriad of personal agendas being raised, it was difficult for people to focus on any particular segment because everything seemed critical.

While teacher preparation programs in higher education vary slightly from institution to institution, generally they have been organized around four components: general education, foundations, instructional knowledge and practice (Spodek and Saracho, 1990). It has also been noted that the majority of current teacher preparation programs require an average of 120 hours of coursework for graduation (Feiman-Nemser, 1990).

The Elementary Education program at Sam Houston State University consists of 66 hours of Academic foundation courses; 48 hours which constitute an Interdisciplinary Academic Studies major; and 18 hours of Professional Education courses, which includes student teaching (SHSU, 1998). Within the 128 hours of preparation, there are 45 hours of field service experience built into coursework before the students begins their student teaching block. In addition, before students can be admitted into the methods block (traditionally the semester before they student teach), they must be admitted into the Educator Preparation Program. To apply for this program, the student must have a 2.5 GPA, have passed a state criminal history check, and provided documentation of completion of the academic requirements.

In reviewing the literature, it is apparent that many states have similar or stricter requirements. The state of Washington is currently reviewing their teacher preparation programs and is seeking ways to more effectively train their teachers. A basic skills requirement has been instituted by their state legislature for admittance into the state's teacher preparation programs. Candidates are given four options to demonstrate a proficiency in basic skills. They are:

- Successful completion of an exam in the basic skills of oral and written communication;
- Completion of a bachelor's degree or graduate degree;
- Two years of college level work and a written essay; or
- Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) that are higher than the statewide median for those tests from the prior school year (Harding, 1999).

A key element that has received a great deal of focus within the school reform arena has been the lack of cohesiveness and alignment between the way teachers are prepared and the needs of the schools (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995; Finch, 1991: Goodlad, 1991; Sluss and Minner, 1999). In 1985 John Goodlad and several colleagues established the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington. Their goal was to examine the general failure of connecting schooling and teacher education. Their findings were:

- chronic prestige deprivation of educator preparation programs and the teaching profession
- ill-defined boundaries between what the teaching profession should contain
- segmentation of theory and practice
- regulated conformity from the state which prevents the education community from exercising their knowledge of best practice and have been well documented in the literature

(Friedman, Brinlee et al., 1980; Stones, 1994)

Their first finding addressed the lack of prestige in teacher education. Mackay (1989) writes "the ed (sic) school has been treated like Cinderella--tolerated by her academic sisters only for the work she performs" (p. 64). Historically, teacher preparation has not been considered to be of great importance in the realm of higher education and is best presented in the normal school context. While normal schools no longer exist, the mentality does seem to prevail at many universities (Ducharme and Ducharme, 1996). This lack of prestige manifests itself in reduced planning and budgetary autonomy that is enjoyed by other "colleges" at the university level (Corrigan and Haberman, 1990; Eisner, 1995). Additionally, teacher preparation programs are not self contained and draw many of their classes from outside their venue.

Another finding of the study dealt with the lack of program coherence. While all states have some type of regulations and requirements for certifying teachers (Latham, 1999), when confronted with a teacher shortage states have consistently lowered the standards so that schools can hire people who have little or no preparation for teaching (Corrigan and Haberman, 1990). According to Darling-Hammond:

> although no state will allow a person to fix plumbing, style hair, practice medicine, or write wills without completing training and passing an examination, more than forty states offer emergency and temporary licenses to teachers who do not meet these basic requirements. (1997, p. 273)

As a possible remedy for these concerns, collaborations between public schools and university teacher preparation programs have been established. These Professional Development Schools (PDS) often result in the redesign of the teacher preparation

programs to better address a common vision, bring theory and practice into a more realistic alignment and provide increased time for the pre-service teachers in actual classrooms (Kelly, 1997). In a review of the findings of several research projects, comparing traditionally prepared graduates with PDS graduates, teachers who were trained in PDS environments were:

- more satisfied with their pre-service programs and felt more prepared;
- viewed by their supervising teachers as better prepared for their first year of teaching;
- preferred by principals when hiring over traditionally prepared teachers
- considered by their principals to be able to start faster and experience fewer overall "beginning" teacher problems than those from traditional programs.

(Kelly, 1997)

In Texas, there are more than 40 PDS schools established within the 65 approved teacher education programs. With this strong commitment, it is hoped that better collaboration between school communities and universities will help stem the tide of teacher attrition and provide for a more competent, confident, and satisfied teaching force (Holmes Group, 1990; Goodlad, 1990).

In Texas, a proposal is currently before the State Board for Educator Certification that would allow school districts to hire teachers with college degrees but no education training. Under this plan, districts would give out "transitional certificates" to college graduates who have knowledge of the subject they would be teaching, but no formal training or degree in it (Falkenberg, 2000). The Texas Federation of Teachers, Texas

State Teachers Association, and Texas Classroom Teachers Association have all expressed strong condemnation of the plan. The research is very clear that teacher education and professional preparation do make a measurable difference in student success (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995; Ducharme and Ducharme, 1996; Eisner, 1995; Friedman, Brinlee et al., 1980; Goodlad, 1991; Goodlad, 1994; Lucas, 1997).

Much of the literature identifies the segmentation of theory and practice as a major area of concern in reforming teacher preparation programs (Housego, 1996). In examining the coursework required within teacher preparation programs, little attention is paid to how it all fits together (Goodlad, 1994). Major theoretical themes are introduced in isolation, and how they apply to the actual teaching process is not clearly conveyed (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995; Goodlad, 1991; Reynolds, 1993; Reynolds, 1995; Spodek and Saracho, 1990). Stone writes:

> theory must relate to school and classroom and teaching experiences. It is impossible to demonstrate the relevance of theoretical constructs to teaching by lecturing to students. Nor is it good enough to declare that student teachers will see the relevance later when they have been teaching for some time. (1994, p. 312).

To further muddy the waters, there are numerous stakeholders in public education. In addition to the students, families, communities, the individual states, universities, and colleges of education all demand to have their voice heard in regulating education (Kochmann, 1995).

Each state has three clear goals in the educational arena. The state holds the power to accredit their teacher education programs, establishes specific criteria for program standards that the universities must meet, and almost all states require individuals to pass tests of basic skills before they can gain admittance to university teacher preparation programs (Corrigan and Haberman, 1990).

The university also has additional regulations that must be addressed. Each university sets the admission criterion of all entering students, determines the general education requirements, defines what is required for an area of specialization, and establishes the graduation requirements. Within the university, the college of education sets additional standards for acceptance into the teacher preparation program and some type of exit exam (Ambach, 1996; Corrigan and Haberman, 1990). To meet each stake holder's expectations and the requirements of the students, parents, and school districts is a daunting task.

A five year longitudinal study was done to assess former students' perception of the strengths and weaknesses of their teacher preparation program and the consistency of those perceptions over time (Kochmann, 1995). Four purposes were identified as the reasons for the program evaluations. First was the issue of accountability to the shareholders in the educational process (public, accreditation, the state, etc.). Program improvement was the second reason. Through the gathering of data, programs could identify both the strengths and the weakness that are in their program and take action. The third purpose of the program evaluation was to develop an understanding of teachers, pedagogy and teacher education. Without examining what we are and how it

impacts the educational community, we cannot grow to meet the demands of the role of the ever changing teacher. The final reason for program evaluation was to build the knowledge production on this issue.

The results of the study found that the first and sixth year teachers were more positive about their teacher preparation than second, third, fourth, or fifth year teachers. The reasons given by the author for each year was subjective, and no hard data was given for the actual reasons for the decisions. In general, it was indicated that the experiences the teachers had had previously colored their perception on the survey instrument. A study reported in 1987 had similar results (Hummel, 1987).

Preparing Teachers for a New Audience

With the "lack of student achievement" and "how to raise the scores" issues still receiving the lion's share of attention, little has been done to address the issue of reforming the teacher preparation programs to meet the needs of diverse populations (Levine, 1996; Valenciana, 1995). Yet, there is an expanding vocal group who feel teacher preparation programs have not kept pace with the rapid changes in society and technology (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995; Flaxman, 1998; Goodlad, 1990; Goodlad, 1994; Lucas, 1997). This group makes the point that students are being prepared for a world and workplace which no longer exists (Friedman, Brinlee et al., 1980). Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond states:

> Because the great masses of students need to be educated for thinking work rather than for low-skilled factory tasks, and educational success is a necessity

rather than a luxury for a chosen few, schools are being pressured to change. (1995, p. 2)

In addition to the changing workplace, the needs of the students and families who make up this new diverse population are very different from that of their predecessors (Hammond & Onikam, 1997; Kelly, 1997). Hodgkinson (1992) points out that the United States is experiencing its largest influx of immigrants in recent times. The sheer number of different immigrant groups represented in our schools threatens to overwhelm the teachers' and school districts' ability to meet these children's needs. Social and family structures have changed so that children are many times left to their own devices without positive role models or support. This lack of structure and support has carried over into the educational arena and left the school without the support of the families and the community (Levine, 1996). Without significant changes in the ways new teachers are prepared, they will become less and less ready to take on these new challenges.

There have been a multitude of studies and reports examining, identifying, and addressing the issue of "at-risk" children and how to best fulfill their educational needs (Levine, 1996). From the many reports, a common list of characteristic factors are identified, but there is no real "person" attached to the characteristic. To best prepare our future teachers, they must begin to understand and become empathetic with the individual rather than the label (Jones, 1995).

Current statistics gathered from The Children's Defense Fund , 1998 Texas Profile (Children's Defense Fund, 1998) contrast the needs of the current population both in Texas and the United States. These are real people with real concerns that must

be addressed before learning can begin to take place. As with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1968), little will be accomplished without the basics of life being satisfied first.

In Texas, 29% of the children under 18 are poor. In the nation, it is 18.9%. The teen birth rate is more than 76% as compared with 57% of the national population. The average unemployment rate for teenagers from 16-19 in Texas is 21% compared to 17.3% for the nation. With such a large percentage of children with at risk characteristics, it is unsurprising that there has been an increased rise in death from firearms, substantiated claims of child abuse and neglect, children in foster care, and the number of participants in government programs such as Women, Infant and Children (WIC) and the Food Stamp Program in Texas (Texas, 1998).

The demographics of our country are also changing. According to the 1980-1990 census, Texas, California, and Florida accounted for over half of the population growth in the United States and had the highest rate of minority youth growth (Russell and Johnson, 1994). With the release of the 2000 census information, Texas replaced New York as the second largest state in population and growth. With the strong correlation between minority groups and poverty being consistently documented in the literature (Grant and Secada, 1990), it is little wonder that the schools are experiencing the difficulties that they are.

In the sole remaining superpower of the twenty first century, the percentage of children in poverty in the United States is staggering. Consider these statistics;

- 13.5 million children were considered poor in 1998

- 74% of those children who were considered poor lived with a family member who worked at least part of the year
- 36.7% of African American children are considered poor
- 34.4% of Hispanic American children are considered poor.
- 18% of Asian and Pacific Islander American children are considered poor.
- 16.1% of white American children are considered poor.

(1999)

** based on calculations per school day (180 days of seven hours each)

(Children's Defense Fund, 2000).

In considering these data, it should be noted that while the white American population has the smallest percentage of children who are considered poor, they are the majority population in the United States. Vice versa, African-American and Hispanic American populations are smaller percentages of the overall population in the United States and are disproportionately represented among the most poor. The specialized needs of these diverse populations must be addressed; however, the literature makes note of the insidious practice of assigning the less prepared and lower paid teachers to the high-poverty schools (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Reyes, 1997). Master teachers with extensive experience are rarely assigned to work with low income children. Rather, teachers with alternative certification, teachers teaching out of their certification area, inexperienced teachers, teachers with emergency certification or teaching permits and substitute teachers, with or without a college education, are more often assigned to work with the very poor (Lippman, Burns, et al., 1996).

Clearly, the populations have changed, yet teacher preparation programs have been slow to follow suit (Goodlad, 1991). Teachers are having to compete with and help solve problems which either did not exist or were considered so minor in relationship to others that the issue was not addressed in their teacher preparation programs (Jones, 1995). Teacher preparation programs must be redesigned to address the needs of this diversity and continuing educational opportunities must be made available to teachers currently in the field (Grant and Secada, 1990).

A four year case study was done as a partnership between the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Texas A&M's College of Education beginning in 1987 (Stallings, 1992). Each participant in the study had their own needs that they were attempting to meet. HISD, as a large urban district with a high majority of minority and low SES students, was eager to find solutions to their chronic teacher shortages, low assessment scores, and a more effective program that would lead to improved instruction for their inner city children. Texas A&M's College of Education was attempting to find a way to meet the needs of their student teachers that was more cost and time efficient and provided for a more well planned, consistent student teaching experience.

Initially, the program was slow to organize as teachers in the chosen school had to be identified as wanting to participate and those not provided transfers. A&M also had difficulty in recruiting students who were willing to go to the inner-city school because of its location in a high crime and drug-ridden neighborhood. Eventually,

eleven student teachers were identified. The school program was renamed the Houston Teacher Academy (HTA).

Many positive results have been identified as a result of this study. For the school teachers, they expressed a unanimous feeling of being regarded as a professional, knowledgeable in their field and much more reflective in their pedagogy. School principals who had hired HTA first year teachers remarked that these teachers had much better skills in working with inner-city, low SES and minority populations. In comparison to other first year teachers who had not attended HTA, these same principals ranked the HTA teachers higher in most areas on their Texas Teacher Assessment report (Stallings, 1992).

Not surprisingly, the student teachers seemed to be the most affected by their experience. In their initial contact with their students, the student teachers expressed shock at the language of their children, how much they knew about drugs, sex, and crime, and the deprived environment in which these children were expected to survive and still be successful in school. Through journal writings that the student teachers were required to keep, the development of an awareness of what these children experience on a daily basis became apparent. In an exit interview, a student teacher made the comment, "Having learned to teach in the HTA, I can teach anywhere now." (p. 15).

The knowledge gained for teacher preparation programs was also valuable. This case study demonstrated that it is possible to design a knowledge base of instruction that will successfully prepare teachers to teach in inner-city schools. Several conditions were identified as having to be present for the program to be effective. They are:

- The school environment must be physically safe and emotionally supportive.
- The school must have a principal and faculty committed to their own growth and to preparing new professionals for the field.
- The college faculty must be willing to collaborate with the school teachers in developing new approaches to teaching methods classes and collaborate in providing student teacher seminars at the school site.
- Student teachers must be committed to developing skills to work with students from cultures different from their own.
- The college administration must be willing to reassign faculty positions to the school site.

The long range data gathered from this program indicated that, at the end of four years, 80% of the student teachers trained through the HTA program are successfully teaching multi-cultural students who are considered "hard to teach" (Stallings, 2001).

Charles Bacon (1992) initiated a qualitative study to examine the field experience of his undergraduate students during their placement in a school with students who were two or more years behind their age-mates in reading and/or math. His belief was that even by providing courses and in-school experiences for his pre-service teachers, they were still were not necessarily prepared for the reality of what they would encounter when teaching. He found three assumptions made by the pre-service teachers:

> First, many individuals who elect to enter the teacher preparation program at my institution express a belief that disadvantaged students are different from conventional students as learners, and more importantly as people. Second,

> they come to the teacher role believing that the primary task of the teacher is to convey information to students. Third, some of these teachers-to-be assume that they can effectively deal with students while expressing only minimal regard for how these students live outside of the classroom. ..... the pre-service teachers behave as though they can work with students they see in school without considering how their families, communities, or economic and ethnic backgrounds affect their lives. (p. 1)

His method for gathering data included personal observations by himself and a colleague, conversations with the actual students and interviews with the pre-service teachers and mentor teachers.

The most interesting finding of this study was the pre-service teachers' discovery that educationally disadvantaged students with whom they worked were, in reality, not substantially different from the mainstream students they had worked with in other schools. This was especially apparent in non academic areas. These children were really just like other kids, and because of this shift in perspective, their expectations for these students became more appropriate and supportive.

What they did find was that the educationally disadvantaged, as a group, shared a need for extra attention and motivation to do their assignments. Once shown how to do the work, these students were able to complete the assignments; however, these students all required a great deal of one-on-one support and individual attention to keep them focused and on task. The pre-service teachers noted that this would be especially draining on a classroom teacher with thirty of these types of students in a class.

An additional benefit of the study was the finding that the pre-service teachers began to understand that this population was realistically capable of being academically successful. It was through their meeting with students one-to-one, in small groups, and by establishing meaningful contact that they were able to provide the support that their students needed for success (Bacon, 1992).

Student Achievement

The issue that became identified as being key to solving the ills of the educational system was raising student achievement. It was thought that if schools could identify how to formulate programs that produced students who could read, write, and do arithmetic in an acceptable manner, then educational reform would be a success. This approach was implemented with "new and modern" techniques, models, programs, components, and curriculum being installed, piloted, and advertised as the cure for all educational woes (Levine, 1996; Lucas, 1997; McBee, 1999). Educational reform took on the "flavor of the week" approach as these methods were tried and discarded at an alarming rate. Unfortunately, amid the rush to "fix the kids", the direct correlation between poor student achievement and the quality of instruction by the classroom teacher was overlooked. Clearly, the literature draws the conclusion that the single most important factor in determining student achievement is the classroom teacher. It is the classroom teacher who should possess knowledge and skills beyond content area knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Ferguson, 1991; National Academy of Science, 1997). Yet these issues were being addressed in isolation rather than as major components of a very complex issue (Goodlad, 1990; Goodlad, 1994).

In 1996 a study of a high-poverty Texas middle school was initiated to examine the effect that teachers had on student achievement and resources (Reyes, 1997). The sample included 11 math teachers and 26 English/language arts teachers along with a randomly selected sample of even numbered at-risk and non-at-risk students. Data gathered for the study showed that of the 87 teachers assigned to teach at the sample school, 55% were certified in the subject area in which they were assigned to teach, 11% were certified in a subject other than the subject assigned, 10% had alternative certification, 5% had teaching permits and 11% were long-termed substitutes. Among the math and reading teachers, only 38% were certified in their assigned subject. Over 50% of the faculty had four years of experience or less and the overall personnel turnover pattern was consistently high. In addition, the school had had four administrators in five years.

Results of the study showed that in math, there were no statistical differences in student achievement for either population, regardless of who taught them. Only when the preparation of the at-risk students preparation for taking the TAAS was examined did the results show an increase by those students taught by a certified teacher. In reading, long-term substitutes did a better job of preparing non at-risk students to take the reading portion of the TAAS, and reading teachers with alternative certification did a better job of preparing at-risk students to take the TAAS (Reyes, 1997). In light of the staffing patterns and changes that had taken place in the one year of data collection, it is amazing that anyone was able to explain anything. Clearly this study shows a high-poverty

school that was struggling to meet the needs of its students with little help from the educational system which was supposed to assist it.

In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* which had as its focus eight goals for education to be achieved by the year 2000 (Goals, 1994). Curiously, within the eight goals, teachers were only mentioned once. While this legislation was well intended, it contained many broad statements with which everyone agreed, but had no guidelines or suggestions for implementation. Additionally, there was no mention of how professional educators should go about accomplishing these goals, what would happen if they did not complete them, or even consensus on what the goals meant. Clearly the rhetoric was in place, but the substance was elusive. All fifty states were charged with the task of implementing their own programs to assure the successful accomplishment of these goals. In Texas, the legislature introduced Academics *2000* (TEA, 1994) in November of 1994 in support of Goals 2000. It received $7.1 million to be used in fiscal years 1995-1996, $29.7 million to be utilized in fiscal years 1996 and 1997; $27.2 million for fiscal years 1997 and 1998; and $38.2 million for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. These funds were used to develop an Educational Improvement Plan and it's many programs. There was also an extensive grant program through which school districts could seek support for innovative programs which promoted acquisition of reading skills by the end of fourth grade in their local area.

Throughout the literature centering on teacher preparation programs, the universal theme is for the education of future teachers to be driven by clear and concise

expectations of what is needed to meet the needs of today's students (Goodlad, 1990). Yet, as with Goals 2000, there is little agreement of what those expectations are.

Goodlad and his colleagues put forth many expectations reported from their study published in Teachers for Our Nation's Schools (Goodlad, 1990). These expectations address three specific stake holders in effective school reform: teachers, the nation, and teacher preparation programs. From their data, they established nineteen postulates of conditions that must be considered for redesigning teacher education programs to better meet the needs of school reform.

Course Work

There is a large body of research that demonstrates the positive relationships between education course work and teacher performance in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995). Yet, before course work can be established to support the neophyte teacher, there must be a clear conception of the professional roles for which the teacher preparation programs are preparing their students (Gideonse, 1989). Without a clear focus, students will be offered a hodge podge of conceptions which may or may not be useful in their chosen field. Added to this conundrum is the question of how much of a teacher preparation program should be theoretical and how much should be applied knowledge (Friedman, Brinlee et al., 1980; Kelly, 1997)? There are few clear answers, but a wealth of research opportunities.

In a 1991 study, Ronald Ferguson found that the single most important indicator of student achievement was teacher expertise and experience (Ferguson, 1991). He concluded that:

> what evidence here suggests most strongly is that teacher quality matters and should be a major focus of efforts to upgrade the quality of schooling. Skilled teachers are the most critical of all schooling inputs (p. 490).

Research indicates that poorly trained teachers do not have the educational pedagogy base to provide instruction which accommodates a variety of cognitive styles and learning modes. These poorly trained teachers' classrooms are characterized by worksheets, information taught in isolation, and low level cognitive activity (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995), the exact opposite of what is known to be characteristic of effective classrooms.

The issue of what constitutes an effective teacher and how course work can be designed to elicit this behavior is an area which has many sides but few commonalities. In reviewing this large body of knowledge, most researchers seemed to be in agreement on some components. To be effective in the classroom, one must understand how to structure the subject matter knowledge so that students can relate and apply their learning to other subjects and see ways that ideas connect across fields of study and apply them to real life situations (Wasley, 1999). Teaching strategies must be developed to address the many needs of their students and to address the needs of students who have specific learning disabilities or needs (Children, 1996). Teachers need to understand their subject matter to such a depth as to be able to organize their material so that all learning styles will be considered (Gideonse, 1989). Teachers must have a clear understanding of pedagogical content knowledge, to be able to design lessons so that

they are able to assess what their audience is likely to know and believe about the topic under study, and how the learners might react to new ideas so as to create a productive learning experience (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Teachers must have a firm grounding in understanding how children and adolescents think and behave, both developmentally and cognitively, and how to effectively structure their class so that the students work together. Finally, teachers must learn to add flexibility, adaptability, and creativity to their teaching persona to meet the needs of today's classrooms (Darling-Hammond, Wise et al., 1995).

It should be noted that in all of the literature on teacher preparation and course work that was examined for this study, the one major component that all researchers mentioned as being critical for beginning teacher success is some form of field based or clinical experience during the teacher preparation process. In a survey reported by Friedman (1980) it was stated that "Teachers in training should have early, frequent contact with students in actual classroom settings." This experience was in addition to student teaching and differed by researchers in how it would be organized or implemented.

Heather Featherstone from Michigan State University organized two beginning teacher groups to follow as they began their teaching careers. The participants were all women who had graduated from a variety of public universities. While much of what was presented can be found elsewhere, two items were of notable interest. First, the participants agreed that while university course work was important in preparing them to teach, actual teaching and day to day encounters with students provided them with their

best opportunities to grow and improve their skills. On the other side of the issue, participants felt that they were able to take information from their teacher preparation coursework and apply it to questions posed by their classroom experience (Featherstone, 1993).

Teacher Attrition

Over the last several decades, professionals have made an attempt to understand, identify, and monitor the factors associated with teacher attrition and dissatisfaction in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Dinham, 1994; Dinham & Scott, 1997; Goodlad, 1994; Grady and Grady, 1997; Kim, 1994; Marso & Pigge, 1995; McCreight, 2000; Odell, 1990; Texas Education Agency, 1995; Williams and Williams, 1998). Statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics found that 13% of all public school teachers leave their school of employment, either through transfer to other schools or by leaving the teaching profession completely, each year (Sandholtz, 1990; Whitener, Gruber, et al., 1997). Attrition rates must be accurately measured for a variety of reasons. Foremost, attrition rates largely determine how many teachers will need to be hired for each school year. They are an indicator of the adequacy of compensation levels and working conditions within the profession, and provide useful data as to which specific subject areas need to be provided with additional compensation to fill critical teacher shortages (Betancourt-Smith, 1994; Kirby, 1993; Sandholtz, 1990). While there are numerous studies with a myriad of findings, clearly this is an issue that must be addressed if educators are to effectively plan for the coming years and the much anticipated teacher shortage.

The question that must be addressed next is whether or not there a shortage of teachers? According to the Texas Association of School Administrator Educator Job Bank web site, as of September 3, 2000 there were 69 districts with elementary teacher positions available, 49 districts with middle school teacher positions available and 85 districts with high school teacher positions available (TASA, 2000). As most districts in Texas started their school year in mid August, they were several weeks into the new school year with a significant numbers of openings unfilled. It would appear that Texas is experiencing the forecasted teacher shortage. A recent article that appeared in the Houston Chronicle discusses the difficulties that HISD recruiters have and the competitive nature of the teacher recruitment business (Bryant, 2001). A spokesman for the school district reported that they have an expected recruitment need of 1,200 teachers for 2001-2002 school year. Other sources discussed raising teacher salaries to attract more people to the field (Barker, 1998).

Across the United States there are various initiatives for strategies to encourage teacher retention. In Texas, The Texas Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Assistance Program has been established to support teacher candidates in their quest for teacher certification, and four academies were established to accomplish this goal. The Mentor Training Academy pairs promising minority students in university teacher education programs with incoming school district paraprofessionals; the Professional Development Academy provides professional development training to university faculty; the Cross Cultural Academy provides cross cultural training activities to prepare pre-service teachers for the diverse populations that they will encounter in the school; and

the Leadership Enhancement Academy provides for the establishment of a community of colleagues to study and advance knowledge about minority educator recruitment, retention issues (Gonzalez, 1995).

In studying the patterns of teacher service, a curious model emerges. Teacher attrition follows a U- shaped pattern, with high attrition at the beginning of a teacher's career, very low attrition at the midpoint, and escalating attrition once a teacher is eligible for retirement (Darling-Hammond, 1990). While there are many studies which have examined the high rate of attrition among beginning teachers, little has been done to address the opposite end of the spectrum.

Darling-Hammond notes;

> This is to be expected from the demographic shifts within the teaching profession during this period. During the 1960s and early 1970s, a higher proportion of teachers were young and inexperienced---and subject to higher levels of turnover. This younger force, which resulted from the strong demand for new teachers caused by the baby boom of the 1960s, had become by the 1980s a predominately stable, mid career teaching force, causing low overall turnover levels. As these teachers reach retirement age and are replaced by young attrition-prone recruits, turnover will rise, keeping the demand for teachers high. (1990, p. 277)

Unfortunately, the statistics for retention of beginning teachers are dismal. Thirty percent of new teachers do not teach for more than two years according to a study reported by Sandra Odell and Douglas P. Ferranro in the Journal of Teacher Education

(Williams and Williams, 1998). Further studies cite that another 10% to 20% will leave during the next five years, so that within seven years, 50% of all beginning teachers have left the profession (Coalition, 1998). For minority teachers, the attrition rate has been found to be especially high (Betancourt-Smith, 1994). Common characteristics of these teachers are:

3. less than thirty years old
4. female
5. high scores on teacher exams
6. mid to upper SES
7. little experience
8. low level of commitment to teaching
9. ineffective coping strategies

(Gonzales, 1995)

Additional studies show that those who leave are among the most academically talented teachers (Grady and Grady, 1997; Halford, 1998; Klausmeier, 1994; Knepper, 2000); Odell, 1990). Clearly, this is an area which deserves further examination by all stake holders in the education field.

In 1984, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company commissioned a series of surveys which explored teachers' opinions and concerns about public education in the United States and educational reform. Each year a different issue facing public education was examined and addressed (Metropolitan Life , 1992).

In 1990 a series of three surveys were commissioned to examine the needs, concerns, and key issues that were facing beginning teachers. A key issue was why teachers were leaving the field of education. A group of 1000 teachers who had graduated from college in the spring of 1990 were surveyed. This sampling was designed to be representative of all new teachers in the public school and was drawn from lists of 1990 graduates from a probability sample of colleges listed by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Metropolitan Life, 1992).

The first survey was conducted in the summer of 1990 to measure the expectations of the new graduates prior to their beginning year of teaching in the public schools. The second survey was given at the completion of their first year and examined how their first year of teaching affected their attitudes towards teaching and how the actual experience of teaching compared with their expectations as measured by the first survey. The final survey was given at the end of their second year of teaching and focused on their teaching experience, comparing their attitudes toward teaching as reported on the previous two surveys.

In reporting their findings, a comparison was made between the three surveys that showed a marked decrease in teacher attitude and satisfaction with teaching as the years progressed. An initial question asked their opinion of the statement "all children can learn". In 1990, 93% of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 88% in 1991 and 86% in 1992. This consistent drop clearly targeted an area of concern. When polled as to if they felt "they can really make a difference in the lives of their students", 83% of the 1990 participants strongly agreed that this was possible. However, in 1991

only 68% strongly agreed, and in 1992 the percentage rose to only 71%. When posed their experiences with "many children come to school with so many problems that it's difficult for them to be good students", the results were consistent in showing their concern. The 1990 survey showed that 28% strongly agreed with the statement, 47% strongly agreed in 1991 and 50% strongly agreed in 1992.

At the completion of the third survey, the following reasons were rated as factors in their thinking about leaving teaching:

40% lack of support or help for students from their parents

29% you need(ed) or want(ed) to earn more money

29% lack of support from school administrators

25% all the social problems faced by students make teaching too difficult

It is interesting to note that money, resources and administration were not the number one indicators of why teachers left the profession, yet these are the very points that the media and politicians use as rallying points (Elliott, 2001). In an article written for the Dallas Morning News, it was reported that Senate Education Committee Chairman Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, was expected to sponsor several bills for creative incentive packages to help retain teachers and reduce the teacher shortage. While these incentives have not been passed, some of the options included a mortgage assistance program for teachers, performance bonuses, guaranteed health insurance, and a college loan forgiveness program to offset the cost of earning a bachelor's degree in education (Stutz, 2000).

A series of national probability samples of teachers currently teaching in the public schools were examined for the years 1987-1989, 1990-1992 and 1993-95 (Boe, Barkanic et al., 1999; Rollefson, 1990). Their purpose was to identify trends and predictors of teacher attrition. The data was gathered through information given on the Public School Teacher Questionnaires of the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), and the Associated Teacher Follow Up Surveys (TFS), a one-year longitudinal component of SASS. From the data gathered by this study, four components were defined within school attrition. They are: teachers who voluntarily moved to a different school, teachers who moved to a different school through involuntary assignment, teachers who voluntarily left teaching altogether, and teachers who left teaching involuntarily through personal action, or who retired.

The results over the six year life of the study showed a stable (7%) rate of school transfer. The reasons for school transfer depended on the four previously stated components; however, personal reasons by the teachers were the most cited. The exit attrition rate also remained constant over the study years at 6% annually. The main reason cited for involuntary leaving was retirement. As with the explanation given for transferring, personal reasons were the number one reason given for leaving voluntarily. It was interesting to note that only 18.5% of the leavers do so for other work or better salary and only 5.4% left due to dissatisfaction with teaching.

In noting their findings in relation to predictors of school attrition, the study found that teacher age, an increase or decrease in dependents, years of teaching experience, marital status and full or irregular/part time teaching status played

significant roles in teacher attrition. One item on the SASS asked respondents to indicate whether they planned on returning the following year. It is interesting to note that there was very little correlation between what was reported on the SASS and what the teachers actually did.

In a study sponsored by the Rand Corporation (Kirby, 1993) teacher attrition was examined from the viewpoint of the "Human Capital Approach". This study tracked a population of 50,000 public school teachers for twenty two years and examined attrition by age, gender and subject area. Subset areas of examination included starting salaries by field, beginning teacher attrition and median survival time for selected groups.

The mind set of the human capital theory is that individuals make systematic assessments of the monetary and non-monetary benefits from various occupations and make systematic decisions throughout their career on whether to enter, stay or leave their chosen profession. Within the monetary component of this model is the initial and future income potential, opportunities for promotion, and the existence and value of benefits. The non monetary component includes working conditions, support of peers and superiors, compatibility of hours and schedules with family and leisure needs, availability of adequate materials, learning attitudes of students, and quality of parental and community support. The rationale with this model is that people will stay in their occupation as long as they perceive it to be beneficial to them through careful weighing of the monetary and non-monetary components. It was also noted that the longer one stayed in a position, the more important these components became due to home

ownership, knowledge of contacts for summer employment, institutional or specialized knowledge, seniority status in the system, and vesting in the retirement system.

In examining age as a predictor of attrition, it was found that younger teachers left the profession more frequently due to unrealized expectations. Beginning teachers come into the profession with certain ideals and visions of what teaching is all about. The first year of teaching can be a crushing blow to these ideals and cause one to re-evaluate their options regarding the cost and benefits of the current job versus alternate jobs. Employment is also conditioned on existing marital status, number of dependents, and residential location. Teachers in early career stages are more likely to have changes in these areas at a higher level than older, more established teachers.

In examining attrition rate by subject area, it was discovered that that elementary teachers and math teachers are among the lowest percentage of teachers leaving the profession. The highest rates of attrition were among physic/chemistry, English and biology teachers. In this study over 70% of the original cohort of physic/chemistry teachers had left and 60% of the English and biology teachers. These teachers, along with math teachers, rarely returned to teaching after a break in service. A follow up study was completed in 1990 (Weiss, 1990) that examined the issue of attrition of science and mathematics teachers. Mathematics teachers were included because of the national concern with the shortage of math teachers. While the largest percentage (75%) of teachers examined were still teaching at the same school, 12% had transferred to different schools and 13% had left the profession. The reasons for leaving the profession were varied and included 25% who had retired, 18% who had moved into

different jobs within the school district or returned to school, and 17% who cited personal reasons. Compensation was mentioned by less than 15% as the primary reason for leaving and only 10% listed working conditions.

A study by Judith Sandholtz (1990) also examined teacher attrition, but from the standpoint of examining the causes and effects of teachers on the verge of leaving, but not having taken the final step. Her study found that dissatisfaction with the work environment coupled with low pay and limited opportunities, pushed teachers to leave. She found that teachers came into teaching with the knowledge of low salaries and status, but were motivated by the rewards of watching their students succeed and grow, and working in a collegial atmosphere (Feiman-Nemser, 1986; Sandholtz, 1990). These intrinsic rewards overshadowed all the other perceived negatives that came with the job. It was only after the intrinsic rewards began to be reduced by the realities of overcrowded classes, hall duty, papers to be graded, meetings, parents, required extra curricular activities, etc., that teachers began to become dissatisfied with their job. Sandholtz states:

> An individual is motivated to continue his participation in an organization only as long as the inducements offered him are as great or greater (measured in terms of his values and in terms of alternatives open to him) than the contribution she is asked to make. (p. 4)

As with previous studies, it was found that beginning teachers felt more confident about their ability to find alternate employment, had less time invested in teaching, and had the freedom to make alternative choices. Conversely, more

experienced teachers felt they had committed too much time, felt unable to find alternate employment at the same pay and benefit level, and were restricted due to family and community obligations.

Included in the study were coping strategies that teachers used to help reduce their feelings of frustration within the system. Some of the more notable ones were:

- Taking a sabbatical or leave of absence
- Changes in teaching assignments
- Alternating teaching strategies and methods
- Reduction of out-of-class preparation and grading
- Restriction of interactions with students, parents and colleagues
- Limiting the activities done in class to ones that require the least amount of preparation and set up time.

It was noted that many of these strategies were counter-productive to why the teachers had gone into teaching in the first place; however, the study stressed that for teachers to stay, they must find ways to cope with their situation.

Throughout the literature, the search for innovative ways to retain teachers is examined. As previously introduced, Professional Development Schools (PDS) are in existence at a large percentage of teacher preparation programs in Texas. A study was initiated to examine the issue of whether or not there was a difference in the rate of attrition between teachers who had attended a PDS school or received the traditional teacher preparation program (Kelly, 1997). Three schools in Northeast Texas were chosen as the target schools. An available population of 1800 were identified as meeting

the criterion of having completed their teacher preparation program between 1992 and 1995 and having taught one year as a full time teacher. A one page survey was mailed and the researchers received a return rate of 26%. There was no discussion as to what might have contributed to the poor response rate, nor of any attempts that were made to improve their rate of return.

The characteristics of the respondents were consistent in all categories. The demographics of the teachers who returned their surveys were between the ages of 26-30 (37%), female (89%), and Caucasian (86%). By certification, elementary constituted 88% of the returns, while secondary had 12%. The largest segment of returns for type of teacher preparation program was the traditional program with 80%, with the PDS reported at 20%.

In examining the responses there was a great deal of commonality between PDS and traditional based programs. Teachers were staying in teaching because of the students, they were motivated to improve professionally, they expected their principals(or other leadership) to be supportive of them and their work, they would leave teaching if they felt there was a lack of support from administrators, teachers or parents, and the characteristic of their principal that would most cause them to leave teaching was non-support of them and their work. Interestingly, the only area of disagreement was over recommendations to improve the quality of teacher preparation programs. Traditional respondents felt that more emphasis should be placed on classroom management (31%), more early classroom teaching or field experiences or practice prior to student teaching (24%) and two semesters of student teaching concluding with the

beginning and end with the public school calendar (15%). Conversely, PDS respondents felt that two semesters of student teaching starting and ending with the public school calendar was most important (45%), with more emphasis on classroom management (23%) and more emphasis on effective teaching strategies (14%) following behind (Kelly, 1997). In another study done in Toronto (Doxey, 1996), additional field experience as an essential component to linking theory and practice was also recommended.

Summary

The literature review for this study focused on six areas: (a) the historical foundation for teacher education in the United States, (b) the effectiveness of current teacher preparation programs across the United States, (c) the identity and characteristics of the new and diverse population currently present in school, (d) student achievement and what effect teachers have on that achievement, (e) what effect the course work component required in teacher preparation programs has on teachers feeling of preparedness, and (f) the external and internal factors that contribute to teacher attrition.

The first section provided a brief summary of the historical foundation for teacher preparation in the United States. Teacher education's rich and diverse traditions were traced from colonial times through modern day. Many of the same issues facing today's teachers were also concerns of the earliest pioneers in education. Issues such as gender bias, lack of social standing, and inadequate salaries were examined in the context of the evolution of teaching. The history and progression of Sam Houston State

University from the first normal school established west of the Mississippi to its current status as a highly respected teacher preparation program in Texas was examined.

The current format of teacher preparation programs was analyzed for its effectiveness in addressing the needs of its stake holders. The majority of the research called for sweeping reforms that would realign current practice into more of a partnership with individual schools and districts. Alternative forms of teacher preparation programs that are more field based, such as those defined as Professional Development Schools, were examined. A strong argument was made for preparing teachers for what they would experience in the real world classroom rather than the hypothetical, theory driven program currently in place. Pre-service Teacher Academies were studied to see if, perhaps, that delivery system could help in training teachers to work with diverse populations. In conjunction with the realignment, the issue of who are the consumers of today's educational system and what are their needs was addressed. Race, gender, poverty and their relationship to teacher preparation and pedagogy were analyzed for their impact on preparing teachers for what they will have to deal with in public education.

A high degree of correlation was found in the literature between student achievement and the level of teacher preparation. It came without surprise that the students will perform better with better trained teachers; however, the issue of how to get those well trained teachers to work in schools with high poverty and minority students seemed to defy solution. Issues such as characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers were examined. Effective teachers were described as understanding how to

structure the subject matter knowledge so that student could relate and apply their learning to other areas, have a clear understanding of pedagogy, and understand their subject matter to such a degree that they were able to organize their material so that all learning styles were considered (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Gideonse, 1989; Wasley, 1999). Vice versa, ineffective teachers do none of those things or do them poorly. # There was a great deal of research that was able to define these characteristics in more depth; however, when contrasted with what teachers are actually facing in the schools, there seemed to be a chasm with no bridge across. The relationship between coursework in current teacher preparation programs and how prepared teachers felt once they had begun their teaching career was explored. Many studies showed that teacher preparation programs had not kept pace with the current needs and expectations of today's educational system. Yet, there were also studies that showed teachers were pleased overall with their preparation in most areas.

The final issue addressed dealt with examining the external and internal factors that contribute to teacher attrition. The external factors dealing with teacher attrition were non competitive salaries, benefits, and the realities of today's diverse classroom issues. In the beginning, teachers were sustained by their internal (intrinsic) feelings of motivation to teach. They stayed for the joy of watching children learn and grow and the knowledge that they could make a difference in the life of children. Only when their intrinsic motivation was overwhelmed by the realities of teaching with the long hours, low pay, discipline problems, lack of status and other discussed concern, did teachers lose their desire to teach and begin to look elsewhere. The majority of the literature

reviewed found that teachers leave for as many reasons as there are individuals; however, the most common reason cited is the lack of parental involvement, and support, and intrinsic motivational factors (Betancourt-Smith, 1994; Klecker, 1996; Ruhl-Smith, 1993).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN, PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

This research was designed to examine what effect the educational preparation curriculum had on recent graduates of Sam Houston State University as they began their professional teaching careers. Additional purposes were to evaluate the current strengths and weaknesses of the educator preparation program at Sam Houston State University as it began the restructuring process leading to compliance with requirements mandated for the Early Childhood-Grade 4 Generalist Certificate that must be implemented by the 2002-2003 academic year. Six research questions were addressed in the study.

1. What is the level of satisfaction with the content area preparation received, as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Preparation Program?
2. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation of how to respond to diverse populations as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
3. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation for developing professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

4. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation received in instructional methodology as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
5. What is the level of satisfaction with specific coursework contained within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?
6. What is the level of satisfaction with the overall program within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

A review of several research methods indicated that a questionnaire would be an effective procedure to yield the quantitative data necessary to describe the effect the educational preparation curriculum had on recent graduates of Sam Houston State University (Fink, 1995; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

In this chapter, the researcher elaborates on the procedures that were followed in order to accomplish the purpose of this study. Sections contained in this chapter include population, instrumentation, procedures and an analysis of the data.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was the 909 graduates of the Sam Houston State University Teacher Education Preparation Program with elementary certification from 1997 through spring 2000. The names and addresses of the population were obtained through the office of the Associate Dean in the College of Education and Applied Science at Sam Houston State University. A systematic sampling was performed as

outlined in Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The initial sample was set at 505 to account for poor rate of return and the expected large number of undeliverable addresses. All initial mailings were completed by December 1, 2000. Reminder cards were sent on December 18, 2000 to all who had not returned the original mailing. Follow up mailings were completed by January 8, 2001.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed following the guidelines in Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The questionnaire was designed to elicit graduates' perceptions of what effect their experience in the Sam Houston State University's Teacher Preparation Program had on preparing them for a successful teaching experience by using the following likert scale:

A= not prepared at all (-)

B= somewhat well prepared (+)

C= neutral

D= moderately well prepared (+)

E= very well prepared (+)

The questionnaire was validated by a panel of eight students in the teacher preparation program who were preparing to student teach. These students were chosen because they were at the end of their teacher preparation program and would have have been exposed to all of the courses listed in the questionnaire, but would not be included in the study population. They were asked to respond with criticisms and recommendations for improving the questionnaire. Their input was gathered and

adjustment were made where necessary. Four professors from Sam Houston State University also participated in the validation process. Dr. John Huber, Professor of Elementary Education and Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. David Henderson, Professor of Secondary Education, Dr. Erin Johnson, Professor-Associate Dean for the College of Education and Applied Science and Dr. Samuel Sullivan, Professor of Secondary Education all evaluated the questionnaire and provided criticisms and recommendations for improving the questionnaire.

Procedures

Permission and support from Dr. Carl Harris, Dean of the College of Education and Applied Science and the Office of Teacher Preparation at Sam Houston State University was obtained for the undertaking of this study. The researcher also obtained permission from the Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M University Committees For The Protection Of Human Subjects to conduct this study.

A cover letter assuring anonymity as well as giving careful instructions for completion of the instrument accompanied each questionnaire (Appendix A). The cover letter included an explanation of the purpose of the study and a self addressed stamped envelope to facilitate ease of return to the researcher. Also included in the packet was the questionnaire (Appendix B) and a scantron for recording answers. All participants were assigned a number from 1-505 and their envelopes were coded with this number to track rates of response. The included scantron was not coded to insure anonymity to the respondents. At the top of the questionnaire, a statement was included for a respondent to mark if they did not want to participate. Instruments were mailed to their homes in

the late fall of 2000. A week before the requested date of return, a reminder note (Appendix C) was sent to all participants who had not returned their surveys. A week after the due date, a second survey packet was mailed out. The cover letter included in the second mailout was printed on bright paper with a request for attention in a different font across the corner. Due to the poor rate of return, collection of data continued into February of 2001. During this time the researcher continued to attempt to persuade the population to return their surveys. A major problem with the survey returns seemed to be the mobility of the population. Of the 505 surveys that were originally mailed, 105 were initially returned with no forwarding address. A total of 196 surveys were returned that provided usable data and 21 were returned that did not wish to participate in the study. The researcher used internet and traditional phone books to attempt to locate the remaining 183 participants at their last known address and town. Twenty one people had current phone numbers and the research contacted them by phone. Four responded and agreed to return a new survey packet which they subsequently did and their number was added to the final total. Eleven did not return phone calls and/or messages that the researcher left with whomever answered the phone or on their answering machines. Six people did not want to participate. Data analysis and computational requirements were accomplished in March, 2001. The final number of usable returns was 196.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was obtained by using basic questionnaire research operations as outlined in Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The computer program SPSS was used to facilitate the analysis of the data. Results of the

study are reported using appropriate numerical and graphical techniques to depict descriptive statistics, such as, means, frequencies, and percentages as well as appropriate inferential statistics to further interpret the data. Multiple displays such as tables, charts, and graphs are used to present findings.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major purpose of this study was to examine what effect the educational preparation curriculum had on recent graduates of Sam Houston State University as they began their professional teaching careers. Additional purposes were to evaluate the current strengths and weaknesses of the educator preparation program at Sam Houston State University as it begins the restructuring process leading to compliance with requirements mandated for the Early Childhood-Grade 4 Generalist Certificate that is to be implemented by the 2002-2003 academic year.

A questionnaire provided the information for the research results presented in this chapter. This questionnaire was developed and validated using input from current members of the Sam Houston State University, College of Education and Applied Science faculty and students. The General Information section of the questionnaire requested demographic information from each participant. Part 1 was developed to address the level of preparedness as applied to specific teacher competencies outlined by the state of Texas. If participants answered no to question 2 or 3 in the General Information section, they were asked to skip this portion of the questionnaire and proceed to Part 2. Part 2 gathered data pertaining to the effectiveness of each course offered in the Sam Houston State University Teacher Preparation Program.

Profile of the Respondents

The data collected under General Information were gathered through four questions:

1. What year did you graduate from Sam Houston State University?
2. Are you currently teaching?
3. Are you currently teaching in Texas?
4. What year did you begin to teach?

Table 1.–Frequency and Percentages of Respondents by Year Graduated from Sam Houston State University

Year	f	P
2000	26	13.5
1999	49	25.4
1998	75	38.9
1997	43	22.3
	n= 193	

In examining the data in Table 1, there is a relatively even distribution of the number of returns for 1999 and 1997 graduation years. The lower number of returns for the 2000 graduation year is possibly explained by noting that only those who had graduated by spring 2000 were included in the target population. By only including one graduation class in the target population, the eligible number of participants is effectively reduced by the number of graduates in August and December of 2000. The largest number of returns came from 1998. This might be explained by a larger than

normal graduating class or a larger percentage of non traditional graduates who are not as mobile as the traditional graduates and therefore received the survey at their graduation address.

Tables 2 and 3 report on the number of respondents that are currently teaching (90%) and teaching in Texas (95%).

Table 2.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Currently Teaching

Currently Teaching	F	P
yes	175	90.2
no	19	9.8
	n= 194	

As reported in Chapter III, there was a very high percentage of graduates that could not be located from the survey sample. This would account for the high percentage of graduates who are currently teaching.

Table 3.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Currently Teaching in Texas

Currently Teaching in Texas	F	P
yes	173	95.1
no	9	4.9
	n= 182	

Table 4.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Who Were First Year Teachers

Year	f	P
2000	40	22.5
1999	66	37.1
1998	44	24.7
1997	28	15.7
	n= 178	

Table 4 reflects the percentage of first year teachers for each year in the survey population. These numbers are consistent with the numbers reported in Table 1 (p. 57). In 1997, 43 teachers responded to the survey and the following year, 1998, 44 teachers were first year teachers. In 1998, 75 teachers responded to the survey and in 1999, 66 were first teachers. In 1999, 49 teachers responded to the survey and in 2000, 40 were first year teachers. The slight difference between each year, 1 between 1997 and 1998, 11 between 1998 and 1999, and 9 between 1999 and 2000 might be explained through direct hiring from student teaching or personal circumstances.

The analysis of data that follows focuses on the six research questions. Each research question was addressed independently. The research questions were:

1. What is the level of satisfaction with the content area preparation received, as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
2. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation of how to respond to diverse populations as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
3. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation for developing professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

4. What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation received in instructional methodology as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?
5. What is the level of satisfaction with specific coursework contained within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?
6. What is the level of satisfaction with the overall program within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

Research Question #1

What is the level of satisfaction with the content area preparation received, as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This competency was evaluated in two ways by the respondents. First, they were asked to evaluate preparedness by the five areas of study in the teacher preparation program at Sam Houston State University. These areas of specialization are Elementary Education (EED), Early Childhood Education (ECE), Bilingual Education (BSL), Special Education (SPD) and Reading (RDG). Respondents were instructed to leave areas blank for course work they had not taken. This resulted in missing or incomplete data. The data gathered in questions 5-9 was not analyzed by the researcher. The purpose of having the respondents answer the questions by subject area was to give the respondents an opportunity to reflect on how each area of study helped them develop

this competency. Many of the respondents were several years removed from the college classroom and the researcher felt that they might need the opportunity to reflect on the components that were involved in their teacher preparation program before answering the question. In Part 2 of the survey, each respondent was given the opportunity to evaluate each area of study and that information was analyzed and will be discussed later in research question 5.

Table 5 outlines the second evaluation of this question with the data gathered from question 10 and illustrates the frequencies and percentages of respondents overall perception of preparedness to develop their current content area knowledge base.

Table 5.--Frequency and Percentages of Feeling of Sam Houston State University Graduates Being Prepared in Current Content Area Knowledge

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	3	1.7
somewhat well prepared	33	19.0
neutral	22	12.6
moderately well prepared	92	52.9
very well prepared	24	13.8
	n= 174	

The responses were sorted into five categories: not prepared at all (-), somewhat well prepared (+), neutral, moderately well prepared (+), and very well prepared (+). A total of 85.7% responded positively while 1.7% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in current content area knowledge. The remainder, 12.6%, were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with 52.9%. A 12.1% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (1.7%) and "very well prepared" (13.8%). The total possible respondents for this question were 187. The number of questionnaires available for analysis of this section of the questionnaire was 196. In subtracting the respondents not teaching in Texas (19), a remaining number of 177 was available to respond to this question. The number of respondents was 174 for this question with three respondents leaving this question blank.

Research Question #2

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation of how to respond to diverse populations as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This competency was evaluated in two ways by the respondents. First, they were asked to evaluated preparedness by the five areas of study previously discussed in the teacher preparation program at Sam Houston State University. The data gathered in questions 17-21 was not analyzed by the researcher. The purpose of having the respondents answer the questions by subject area was to give the respondents an opportunity to reflect on how each area of study helped them develop this competency. Table 6 outlines the second evaluation of this question from the data gathered from

question 22 and illustrates the frequencies and percentages of respondents overall perception of preparedness to respond to diverse groups of students. Taking into consideration the qualified respondents of people teaching in Texas (n=177) and the number of actual respondents (n=176) there was 1 who did not answer this question.

The responses were sorted into the five categories mentioned previously. A total of 74.4% responded positively while 6.3% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in responding to diverse groups of students. The remainder, 19.3%, were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with 38.6%.. The was a reported difference between "not prepared at all" (6.3%) and "very well prepared" (16.5%) of 10.2%.

Table 6.--Frequency and Percentages of Being Prepared in Responding to Diverse Groups of Students as Perceived by Sam Houston State University Graduates

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	11	6.3
somewhat well prepared	34	19.3
neutral	34	19.3
moderately well prepared	68	38.6
very well prepared	29	16.5
	n= 176	

Research Question #3

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation for developing professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This competency was evaluated through several questions by the respondents. Initially, they were asked to evaluated preparedness by the five areas of study as illustrated previously. The data gathered in questions 23-27, was not analyzed for reasons discussed previously. Table 7 outlines the evaluation of this question with the data gathered from question 28 of the questionnaire and illustrates the frequencies and percentages of respondents overall perception of preparedness in being an advocate and effective communication skills. The responses were sorted into the previously stated five categories. There were 4 respondents who did not answer this question between qualified respondents (n=177) and the actual number reporting (n=173).

A total of 72.8% responded positively while 6.4% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in being an advocate and having effective communication skill. The remainder, 20.8%, were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with 42.2 % of the population reporting. A difference of 8.6% was reported when comparing "not prepared at all" (6.4%) and "very well prepared" (15.0%)

Table 7.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Being Prepared in Being An Advocate and Effective Communication Skill

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	11	6.4
somewhat well prepared	27	15.6
neutral	36	20.8
moderately well prepared	73	42.2
very well prepared	26	15.0
	n= 173	

Table 8 details the frequency and percentages of preparedness to be a reflective practitioner demonstrating a commitment to learning, improving the profession and maintaining professional ethics. These data were gathered from question 34. Questions 29-33 were used as focus questions and were not analyzed as previously explained. The responses were sorted into the previously stated five categories. There were 174 responses with 3 respondents choosing not to answer from the qualified respondents (n=177). A total of 83.3% responded positively while 4.0% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in being a reflective practitioner demonstrating a commitment to learning, improving the profession and maintaining professional ethics. The remainder, 12.6%, were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with

40.2 % of the population reporting. A 27.0% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (4.0%) and "very well prepared" (31.0%).

Table 8.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Being Prepared To Be a Reflective Practitioner Demonstrating A Commitment To Learning, Improving The Profession and Maintaining Professional Ethics

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	7	4.0
somewhat well prepared	21	12.1
neutral	22	12.6
moderately well prepared	70	40.2
very well prepared	54	31.0
	n= 174	

Table 9 outlines the frequency and percentages of preparedness in collaborate relationships with parents and colleagues. The responses were sorted into the specified five categories. Question 46 was used to gather the necessary data. Questions 41-45 were not analyzed as previously discussed. There were 3 respondents who chose not to answer from the qualified respondents (n=177). A total of 72.5% responded positively while 10.9% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in collaborative relationships with parents and colleagues. The remainder,16.7%, were neutral. The mode was

"moderately well prepared" with 39.7 % of the population reporting. A 5.8% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (10.9%) and "very well prepared" (16.7%).

Table 9.--Frequency and Percentages of Being Prepared in Collaborate Relationships With Parents and Colleagues as Perceived by Sam Houston State University Graduates

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	19	10.9
somewhat well prepared	28	16.1
neutral	29	16.7
moderately well prepared	69	39.7
very well prepared	29	16.7
	n= 174	

Table 10 details the frequency and percentages of being prepared to grow professionally after graduation. The responses were sorted into the previously stated five categories. Question 52 was used for the data analysis with questions 47-51 serving as the focus questions. Of the qualified respondents (n=177) 174 answered question 52. This provided a number of 3 as choosing not to respond. A total of 65.5% responded positively while 9.8% negatively to the feeling of being prepared to grow professionally after graduation. The remainder, 24.7% were neutral. The mode was "moderately well

prepared" with 29.9 % of the population reporting. A 12.0% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (9.8%) and "very well prepared" (21.8%).

Table 10.--Frequency and Percentages of Being Prepared to Grow Professionally After Graduation as Perceived by Sam Houston State University Graduates

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	17	9.8
somewhat well prepared	24	13.8
neutral	43	24.7
moderately well prepared	52	29.9
very well prepared	38	21.8
	n= 174	

Research Question #4

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation received in instructional methodology as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This competency was evaluated in two ways by the respondents. First, they were asked to evaluate preparedness by the five areas of study previously outlined in the teacher preparation program at Sam Houston State University in questions 35-39. These

questions were not analyzed as their purpose was to provide a focus for question 40. Table 11 outlines the evaluation of question 40 and illustrates the frequencies and percentages of respondents overall perception of preparedness in instructional methodology. As previously stated, responses were sorted into five categories. With the number of qualified respondents (n=177) and actual number of respondents (n=174) there were 3 respondents who chose not to answer.

Table 11.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Being Prepared in Instructional Methods, Materials and Strategies

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	7	4.0
somewhat well prepared	27	15.4
neutral	17	9.7
moderately well prepared	70	40.0
very well prepared	54	30.9
	n= 175	

A total of 86.3% responded positively while 4.0% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in instructional methods, materials and strategies. The remainder, 9.7% were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with 40.0 % of the population

reporting. A 26.9% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (4.0%) and "very well prepared" (30.9%).

Table 12 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the feeling of being prepared in creating a learner-center community. The responses in the five categories were as previously discussed. Questions 11-15 were used as focus questions and therefore not analyzed as stated previously. Question 16 was used for the analysis in Table 12, with 5 respondents not answering, when comparing qualified respondents (n=177) and actual respondents (n=173).

Table 12.--Frequency and Percentages of Sam Houston State University Graduates Feeling of Being Prepared in Creating a Learner-Centered Community

Feeling of Preparedness	F	P
not prepared at all	5	2.9
somewhat well prepared	28	16.2
neutral	23	13.3
moderately well prepared	91	52.6
very well prepared	24	15.0
	n= 173	

A total of 83.8% responded positively while 2.9% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in creating a learner-centered community. The remainder, 13.3%, were neutral. The mode was "moderately well prepared" with 52.6% of the population reporting. A 12.1% difference was reported between "not prepared at all" (2.9%) and "very well prepared" (15.0%).

Research Question #5

What is the level of satisfaction with specific course work contained within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

Table 13 presents an analysis of the mean response and standard deviations of the respondents perception of preparedness to teach in each of the areas of course work examined. Elementary and reading education course work reported the largest number of respondents with 176 and 175 respectively. This large rate of return was expected because both of these areas are part of the core curriculum for the current Elementary Certificate. The response for elementary was $\underline{M} = 3.6136$, $\underline{SD} = 1.1205$ and $\underline{M} = 3.6514$, $\underline{SD} = 1.0821$ for reading. This translated into a strong positive association with the respondents perception of preparedness to teach.

Special Education received a response rate of 163 and a $\underline{M} = 3.2515$, $\underline{SD} = 1.2637$. which demonstrated a strong positive association. This is also an area that is required for most degree plans in Elementary Certification. Early Childhood received a response rate of 111 and a $\underline{M} = 3.2613$, $\underline{SD} = 1.0244$. As Early Childhood is currently only an endorsement on the Elementary Certificate, a lower number of respondents was

expected. However, the mean was consistent with a strong positive association with the perception of preparedness to teach.

Bilingual Education course work received the lowest number of respondents at 86. As with Early Childhood, Bilingual Education is an endorsement and the lower number was expected, however, the $\underline{M} = 2.8488$, $\underline{SD} = 1.0235$ was the lowest reported in all five areas.

Table 13.--Descriptive Statistics of Sam Houston State University Graduates' Perceptions Concerning Coursework in Elementary, Early Childhood, Bilingual, Special Education, and Reading

Coursework	n	M	SD
Elementary	176	3.6136	1.1205
Early Childhood	111	3.2613	1.0244
Bilingual	86	2.8488	1.0235
Special Education	163	3.2515	1.2637
Reading	175	3.6514	1.0821

Research Question #6

What is the level of satisfaction with the overall program within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

Tables 14 , 15 and 16 illustrate the Analysis of Variance performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the questions dealing with year graduated, currently teaching in Texas and year began to teach. No statistically significant differences were found.

Table 14.–Analysis of Variance: Perceptions of Sam Houston State University Graduates' Feelings of Preparedness To Teach And Year Graduated

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig
How would you Rate the overall SHSU Educator Preparation program in preparing you to teach? *What year did you graduate from SHSU?	Between Group (Combined)	6.638	3	2.213	1.465	.226
	Within Groups	282.461	187	1.510		
	Total	289.099	190			

Table 15.–Analysis of Variance: Perceptions of Sam Houston State University Graduates' Feelings of Preparedness To Teach And Currently Teaching In Texas

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
How would you Rate the overall SHSU Educator Preparation program in preparing you to teach? *Are you currently teaching in Texas?	Between Group (Combined)	.032	1	.032	.021	.885
	Within Groups	289.068	189	1.529		
	Total	289.099	190			

Table 16.--Analysis of Variance: Perceptions of Sam Houston State University Graduates' Feelings of Preparedness To Teach And Year Began Teaching

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig
How would you Rate the overall SHSU Educator Preparation program in preparing you to teach? *What year did you begin to teach?	Between Group (Combined)	2.345	3	782	.513	.674
	Within Groups	260.513	171	1.523		
	Total	262.857	174			

Table 17 and 18 illustrate the mean response and standard deviations of the respondents perception of the overall program within the Sam Houston State Teacher Preparation Program. Table 17 reports the means of those respondents currently (n=172) as M= 3.6221, SD= 1.2246 and not currently (n=19) as M= 3.5789, SD= 1.3464 teaching in Texas.

Table 17.--Overall Perception of Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as Reported by Participating Graduates Currently Teaching in Texas

Currently Teaching In Texas	n	M	SD
yes	172	3.6221	1.2246
no	19	3.5789	1.3464

Table 18 reports the same information broken down by year of graduation.

Table 18.--Descriptive Statistics for Overall Perception of Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program Graduates by Graduation Year

Year	n	M	SD
2000	25	3.8000	1.2583
1999	48	3.7500	1.1204
1998	75	3.3867	1.2723
1997	43	3.7674	1.2505

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The major purpose of this study was to examine what effect the educational preparation curriculum had on recent graduates of Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas as they began their professional teaching careers. Additional purposes were to evaluate the current strengths and weaknesses of the educator preparation program at Sam Houston State University as it began the restructuring process leading to compliance with requirements mandated for the Early Childhood-Grade 4 Generalist Certificate that is to be implemented by the 2002-2003 academic year.

A summary of this study and a discussion of the findings will be presented in the first section of this chapter. The second and third sections contain the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Summary

With the assistance of the Office of Teacher Preparation at Sam Houston State University, a list was compiled of the 909 graduates that had been recommended for elementary teacher certification from 1997 through spring of 2000. From the available population, it was decided to send questionnaires to 50 percent of the list. This large percentage was chosen to account for the possibility of a poor rate of return due to the mobility of the population. From October until March, initial and follow up questionnaires were sent. Of the 505 questionnaires mailed, 105 were returned with no

forwarding address, 21 were returned that did not choose to participate, and 196 were returned with usable data. The researcher attempted through multiple means to locate the remaining 183 outstanding questionnaires with no success.

Demographics

Based on the findings of the demographics of this study (N=196), 13.5% of the spring 2000 graduates responded, 25.4% from 1999, 38.9% from 1998, and 22.3% from 1997. Of those respondents, 90.2% were currently teaching and 95.1% of those teaching were teaching in Texas.

The collection of data from the questionnaires provided the basis for analysis to the following six research questions. Research questions 1 through 4 were analyzed in the same manner. The first four questions in each section of the questionnaire were used to provide a focus for the respondents as to the course work they had taken. Only one question from each identified section was used in the analysis. A detailed identification of which question(s) were used for analysis can be found in chapter 4.

Research Question #1

What is the level of satisfaction with the content area preparation received, as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Preparation Program?

This question was evaluated in two parts. The first part of the question asked the respondents to rate how each of the five specialization areas of study in the teacher preparation program prepared them to develop their current content area knowledge base. These areas of specialization are Elementary Education (EED), Early Childhood Education (ECE), Bilingual Education (BSL), Special Education (SPD), and Reading

Education (RDG). The second part of this question asked for the overall perception of preparedness to develop their current content area knowledge base.

Part two of the questionnaire yielded the information that determined the perception of preparedness. Table 5 (p. 62) outlines this perception. A total of 85.7% responded positively while 1.7% negatively to the feeling of being prepared in current content area knowledge. The remainder, 12.6%, were neutral.

Implications. While the largest number of participants responded positively to their feeling of preparedness (85.7%) it should be noted that 52.9% of that number felt "moderately well prepared" and 19.0% felt "somewhat well prepared". At 71.9%, this should be considered a positive relationship in preparedness to develop their content area knowledge base. The comparison between "not prepared at all" (1.7 %) and "very well prepared" (13.8 %) is clearly a strong positive perception. This should be considered an area of strength for the Educator Preparation Program.

Research Question # 2

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation of how to respond to diverse populations as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This question was evaluated in two parts. The first part of the question asked the respondents to rate how each of the five specialization areas of study in the teacher preparation program prepared them to respond to diverse populations. The second part of this question asked for overall perception of preparedness to respond to diverse populations.

Table 6 (p. 64) outlines this perception. A total of 74.4% responded positively while 6.3% negatively to the feeling of being prepared to respond to diverse populations. The remainder, 19.3%, were neutral.

Implications. While the largest number of participants responded positively to their feeling of preparedness (74.4 %) it should be noted that 38.6% of that number actually felt "moderately well prepared" and 19.3% "somewhat well prepared". With 57.9% of the respondents, this should be of concern because it does not provide a definitive feeling of positive preparedness to respond to diverse populations. The comparison between "not prepared at all" (6.3%) and "very well prepared" (16.5%) is clearly a strong positive perception, however, it only accounts for 22.8% of the respondents. With all of the data considered, this is an area that met the needs of most respondents but should be revisited as diversity issues emerge.

Research Question #3

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation for developing professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This competency was evaluated using three questions from the questionnaire. Each question was evaluated in two parts. The first part of the question asked the respondents to rate how each of the five specialization areas of study in the teacher preparation program prepared them to a specific part of the competency. The second part

of each question asked for overall perception of preparedness to a specific part of the competency.

Table 7 (p. 66) outlines the evaluation of the perception of being prepared in being an advocate and effective communication skill. A total of 72.8% responded positively while 6.4% responded negatively to the feeling of being prepared in being an advocate and having effective communication skill. The remainder, 20.8%, were neutral.

Table 8 (p. 67) details the evaluation of the perception of being prepared to be an effective practitioner demonstrating a commitment to learning, improving the profession and maintaining professional ethics. A total of 83.3% responded positively while 4.0% negatively to this question. The remainder, 12.6% were neutral.

Table 9 (p. 68) outlines the evaluation of the perception of being prepared in collaborate relationships with parents and colleagues. A total of 72.5% responded positively while 10.9% negatively to this question. The remainder, 16.7% were neutral.

Table 10 (p. 69) details the evaluation of the perception of being prepared to grow professionally after graduation. A total of 65.5% responded positively while 9.8% negatively to this question. The remainder, 24.7%, were neutral.

Implications. While the largest number of participants responded positively to their feeling of preparedness in Table 7 (p. 66) (72.8%) it should be noted that 42.2% of that number actually felt only "moderately well prepared" and 15.6% "somewhat well prepared" for a total of 57.8%. This should be of concern because it does not provide a

definitive feeling of positive preparedness to respond to being an advocate and effective communication skill. The comparison between "not prepared at all" (6.4%) and "very well prepared" (15.0%) is clearly a positive. This is an area that the Educator Preparation Program should examine further.

Table 8 (p. 67) shows 83.3% of participants responding positively to their feeling of preparedness in being a reflective practitioner demonstrating a commitment to learning, improving the profession and maintaining professional ethics The number of respondents feeling "moderately well prepared" (40.2%) and "somewhat well prepared" (12.1%) provide for 52.3% of the responses. It is the comparison between the "not prepared at all" (4.0%) and "very well prepared" (31.0%) that provides the strongest positive perception of preparedness with 35% of the respondents included. Clearly, this is an area of strength in the Educator Preparation Program

Table 9 (p. 68) shows 72.5% of participants responding positively to being prepared in collaborate relationships with parents and colleagues. It should be noted that 39.7% of that number actually felt only "moderately well prepared" and 16.1% "somewhat well prepared". While this is 55.8% of the respondents, this should be of concern because it does not provide a definitive feeling of positive preparedness. The concern becomes more pronounced when comparing "not prepared at all" and " very well prepared". The comparison between "not prepared at all" (10.9%) and "very well prepared" (16.7%) does not provide enough of a difference to draw a positive perception for this part of the question. This is also the largest percentage of people (10.9%)

responding negatively. When evaluating all of the data presented, this area should be addressed by the Educator Preparation Program as having potential concern.

Table 10 (p. 69) shows 65.5% of participants responding positively to being prepared to grow professionally after graduation. It should be noted that 29.9% felt "moderately well prepared" and 13.8% "somewhat well prepared". This is 43.7% of the respondents and should be of concern when compared with the other percentages in the table. There is a relationship between perception of being "very well prepared" (21.8%) and "not prepared at all" (9.8%). In comparing all of the data in Table 10 (p. 69), this question requires further study and should be examined closely for areas to improve.

Research Question #4

What is the level of satisfaction with the preparation received in instructional methodology as perceived by graduates of the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program?

This question was evaluated in two parts of the questionnaire and each question had two parts. The first part of each question asked the respondents to rate how each of the five specialization areas of study in the teacher preparation program prepared them in being prepared for a specific competency. Question one asked the respondents to rate their perception of being prepared in instructional methods, materials and strategies The second question asked the respondents to apply the same rating to the perception of being prepared in creating a learner-centered community. The second part of each question asked for overall perception of preparedness to the specific competency.

Table 11 (p. 70) outlines the perception of being prepared in instructional methods, materials, and strategies. A total of 86.3% responded positively while 4.0% negatively to the feeling of being prepared. The remainder, 9.7%, were neutral. Table 12 (p. 71) illustrates the perception of being prepared in creating a learner centered community. A total of 83.8% responded positively while 2.9% negatively to the feeling of being prepared. The remainder, 13.3%, were neutral.

Implications. While the largest amount of participants responded positively to their feeling of preparedness in Table 11 (p. 70) (86.3%) it should be noted that 40.0% of that number actually felt "moderately well prepared" and 15.4% "somewhat well prepared" for a total of 55.4%. This should be of concern because it does not provide a definitive perception of positive preparedness in instructional methods, materials and strategies when analyzed alone. The comparison between "not prepared at all" (4.0%) and "very well prepared" (30.9%) is clearly a strong positive perception and it accounts for 34.9% of the respondents. With all of this data considered, this is an area of strength in the Educator Preparation Program.

Table 12 (p. 71) illustrates 83.8% of respondents positively feeling prepared in creating a learner centered community. Of these responses, 52.6% felt "moderately well prepared" and 16.2% felt "somewhat well prepared". At 68.8%, this shows a strong perception of preparedness in this competency. The comparison between "very well prepared" (15.0%)and "not prepared at all (2.9%)" also demonstrates a relationship. When using both comparisons, this is an area of strength in the Educator Preparation Program.

Research Question #5

What is the level of satisfaction with specific course work contained within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

Table 13 (p. 73) illustrates the mean response and standard deviations of the respondents perception of preparedness to teach in each of the areas of specialization offered by the Sam Houston State Teacher Preparation Program. Three of the program areas, elementary (n=176, M=3.6136), special education (n=163, M=3.2515) and reading (n=175, M=3.6514) reported the largest participants and had the most consistent means. Early Childhood (n= 111) reported a respectable number of respondents and showed a positive perception in their feeling of preparedness (M = 3.2613). Bilingual education was the smallest of reporting participants (n= 86) and was evaluated as having a less than positive perception of preparedness (M= 2.8488). While the SD= 1.0235 is reasonable, this should be a concern of the Educator Preparation Program and should be examined as the mean is at the average.

Research Question # 6

What is the level of satisfaction with the overall program within Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program as perceived by graduates of Sam Houston State University?

The mean response and standard deviation of the respondents perception of the overall Educator Preparation Program was analyzed comparing those who are currently teaching in Texas with those who are not. Of the 172 respondents currently teaching in

Texas, a mean ($\underline{M}$ = 3.6221, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.2246) was reported. In examining the 19 who reported that they were not currently teaching in Texas, they also showed a strong positive association ($\underline{M}$ = 3.5789, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.3464) in their satisfaction with the Educator Preparation Program.

In examining respondents' perception by those currently teaching in Texas (Table 17, page 75) and the year they graduated (Table 18, page 76), there is a consistent positive relationship in their satisfaction with how they were prepared to teach in the Educator Preparation Program at Sam Houston State University.

Conclusions

1. Sam Houston State University graduates perceive a strong positive level of satisfaction with the content area preparation, instructional methodology and in creating a learner centered community portion of the educator preparation program.
2. Sam Houston State University graduates perceive a somewhat positive perception of their preparation in responding to diverse populations within the educator preparation program.
3. Sam Houston State University graduates perceive a strong positive perception of preparedness in the area of being a reflective practitioner who demonstrates a commitment to learning, improving the profession and maintaining professional ethics within the educator preparation program.

4. Sam Houston State University graduates perceive a somewhat positive perception of their preparation in being an advocate, communication, collaborative relationships with parents and colleagues and being prepared to grow professionally after graduation within the educator preparation program.
5. Sam Houston State University graduates have a strong perception of satisfaction with their preparation in Elementary, Reading, Special Education and Early Childhood course work.
6. Those graduates who took Bilingual Education course work were less satisfied in their perception of preparedness with Bilingual Education course work in comparison with other specialization responses.
7. There is a strong positive perception of satisfaction from graduates of 2000, 1999 and 1997 with their overall feeling of preparedness to teach.

Recommendations

The recommendation section is divided into two areas: (a) recommendations based on the study and (b) recommendations for further research.

Recommendations Based on the Study

1. The Bilingual Education Program must be examined to determine the cause of the moderate perception of preparing respondents to teach.
2. A more effective method of tracking graduates should be implemented where addresses would be updated as necessary. From the information

gathered, a data base would be compiled that identifies what school districts Sam Houston State University's graduates are teaching in. This would provide the Educator Preparation Program with valuable information of the demographic issues that their graduates are experiencing.

3. The Educator Preparation Program and faculty should use the information gathered through the existing exit interviews at the completion of the student teaching semester for evaluation of the perception of preparedness to teach. This would provide information for addressing a potential concern before it becomes a major issue.
4. The Educator Preparation Program should conduct a yearly mailing of a newsletter that would outline current information about it's program and to solicit comments and suggestions for program improvements from graduates about specific issues they are facing in the schools. This would confirm current addresses of graduates and provide a space for new address information. This also would assist with identifying the school districts where their graduates are teaching.
5. A mentoring/outreach program should be established to support the graduates of the Educator Preparation Program at Sam Houston State University. This will have a two fold benefit by providing support to our graduates and giving the faculty valuable insight into what our graduates

are facing in the school. These data would be used to adjust the teacher preparation program.

6. All areas of the Educator Preparation Program need to be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis to insure that the needs of the educational community and Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program graduates continue to be met.
7. The Educator Preparation Program and faculty should continue to evaluate the needs of the community as issues of diversity evolve. This knowledge should be used to adjust the course work within the Educator Preparation Program to better address the current and real life situations the graduates will encounter in today's schools and society.
8. The Educator Preparation Program faculty should examine issues relating to professional communications and collaborative skills with parents, community and colleagues.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. This study should be replicated with graduates of Educator Preparation Programs whose focus is secondary and/or middle school students. Further research of the needs of a wider range of educators would help other levels in the Educator Preparation Programs better meet the needs of their graduates.

2. A new study should be implemented that examines the specific issue of course work contained in Educator Preparation Programs. This would provide detailed information about how specific classes are meeting the needs of the graduates.
3. A qualitative study should be conducted using the interview method. Based on the personal notes written to this researcher on returned questionnaires from respondents, there were many people who felt the need to elaborate on their experience(s) in the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program.
4. A longitudinal study of graduates should be conducted in yearly increments to measure the changing needs of educators and the educational community.
5. In future studies of this issue, the likert scale should be modified so that there are two levels that reflect dissatisfaction. The current rating of "somewhat well prepared" should be changed to "somewhat prepared". This will provide a more balanced indicator of concern levels.
6. This study should be replicated using gender, ethnicity and age as subsets of the population.
7. This study should be replicated using a sampling from the Educator Preparation Programs within the Texas State University system.

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APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

Margaret A. McGuire M.Ed.
509 S. Haswell Drive
Bryan, Texas 77803
(979) 775-3576

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral candidate at Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas seeking a degree in Educational Administration. As a final requirement for graduation, I have prepared a research record of study entitled,

An Analysis Of Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program And The Effect On Graduate's Perception Of Preparedness To Teach

Your name was given to me by the Office of Teacher Certification at Sam Houston State University as having graduated between 1997 and spring 2000.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief survey that asks you to respond on how the courses that you might have taken while enrolled in the Sam Houston State University Educator Preparation Program prepared you to teach. I would greatly appreciate your help by asking you to look over the survey and, if you choose to do so, complete the survey and return it to me in the self addressed, stamped envelope provided. Please do not write your name on the survey; however, you will notice that your survey envelopes are coded with a number. This number will only be used to track the rate of return of completed surveys. Should you choose not to participate in this survey, I would appreciate your indicating this on the first page of the survey and returning it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope so that I will not bother you further.

I hope that you will take the few minutes necessary to complete this survey and return it to me by January 20, 2001. Without the help of colleagues like yourself, research of this type would not be possible. If you would like a summary of my findings, please enclose a letter size self-addressed stamped envelope and I will mail you my results.

Thank you so much for your participation.

Margaret A. McGuire

"I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A & M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Richard E. Miller, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at (979) 845-8585 (email: rich-miller@tamu.edu)."

"This project has been reviewed by Sam Houston State University's Committee For The Protection Of Human Subjects (phone: (936) 294-3621)."

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

_____**I do not wish to participate in this record of study research.**
(Please return this packet in the provided envelope.)

Please mark your answer on the provided scantron and return to me in the enclosed envelope by January 20, 2001.

General Information

1. What year did you graduate from Sam Houston State University? 2000 **A** 1999 **B** 1998 **C** 1997 **D**

2. Are you currently teaching ? yes **A** no **B** **(If no, please skip Part 1 of the survey and complete Part 2.)**

3. Are you currently teaching in Texas? yes **A** no **B** **(If no, please skip Part 1 of the survey and complete Part 2.)**

4. What year did you begin to teach? 2000 **A** 1999 **B** 1998 **C** 1997 **D**

"I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A & M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Richard E. Miller, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at (979) 845-8585 (email: rich-miller@tamu.edu)."

"This project has been reviewed by Sam Houston State University's Committee For The Protection Of Human Subjects (phone: (936) 294-3621)."

next page please

Self Rating of Teacher Perception of Satisfaction With Sam Houston State University's Teacher Preparation Program

Part 1

Please respond to the following statements.

Using the scale below, rate yourself on each of the following teacher proficiencies. Please circle your answer directly on the survey. For each proficiency, indicate to what extent each component of the teacher preparation coursework prepared you to teach. If unsure of which courses are involved, please refer to Part 2 of this survey for a list of coursework. If you did not take the course(s) leave your answer blank.

A	B	C	D	E
Not prepared at all	somewhat well prepared	neutral	moderately well prepared	very well prepared

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current content area knowledge base?

5. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
6. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
7. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
8. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
9. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
10. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current proficiency in creating a learner-centered community?

11. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
12. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
13. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
14. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
15. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
16. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current proficiency in responding appropriately to diverse groups of students?

17. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
18. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
19. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
20. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
21. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
22. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

next page please

A	B	C	D	E
Not prepared at all	somewhat well prepared	neutral	moderately well prepared	very well prepared

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current proficiency in being an advocate and demonstrating effective communication skill?

23. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
24. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
25. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
26. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
27. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
28. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current proficiency in being a reflective practitioner who demonstrates a commitment to learn, improve the profession and maintain professional ethics?

29. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
30. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
31. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
32. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
33. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
34. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current proficiency in being able to use a variety of instructional methods, materials and strategies?

35. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
36. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
37. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
38. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
39. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
40. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

next page please

A	B	C	D	E
Not prepared At all	somewhat well prepared	neutral	moderately well prepared	very well prepared

To what extent did the following teacher preparation course work help you develop your current proficiency in fostering positive collaborative relationships with parents and colleagues?

41. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
42. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
43. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
44. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
45. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
46. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency.

To what extent did the following teacher preparation coursework help you develop your current desire to continue to grow professionally after graduation?

47. Courses taken in Elementary Education (EED).
48. Courses taken in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
49. Courses taken in Bilingual Education (BSL).
50. Courses taken in Special Education (SPD).
51. Courses taken in Reading (RDG).
52. Overall perception of preparedness for this teacher proficiency

Please continue with Part 2

Part 2

Below are the classes offered by Sam Houston State University as part of the Teacher Preparation Program. Please rate each class as to the extent you feel the course content prepared you to teach.

A	B	C	D	E
Not prepared At all	somewhat well prepared	neutral	moderately well prepared	very well prepared

53.	EED 374	Human Growth and Learning
54.	EED 434	Mathematics in the Elementary School
55.	EED 435	Science in the Elementary School
56.	EED 436	Social Studies in the Elementary School
57.	EED 483	Assessment, Evaluations, and Classroom Management in the Elementary School

next page please

58.	SPD 231	Introduction to Special Education
59.	SPD 331	Behavior Disorders
60.	SPD 367	Curriculum and Methods for Exceptional Children and Youth
61.	SPD 377	Learning and Learning Disabilities
62.	SPD 378	Classroom Management and Parent Involvement in Special Education
63.	SPD 438	Diagnostic Assessment of Exceptional Children and Young
64.	SPD 460	Psychology of Mental Retardation
65.	RDG 235	An Introduction to Language and Literacy
66.	RDG 285	Literacy as a Foundation for Learning
67.	RDG 370	The Teaching of Reading
68.	RDG 385	Causes and Remediation of Reading Disabilities
69.	RDG 390	Reading and Thinking Through the Language Process
70.	RDG 393	Emergent Literacy
71.	RDG 431	Literacy Assessment and Instruction
72.	ECE 273	Curriculum in the Preschool
73.	ECE 275	Study of the Preschool Child
74.	ECE 329	Guidance of Young Children
75.	ECE 319	Guidance of Young Children/Field Experience
76.	ECE 433	Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Young Children
77.	ECE 439	Language Development of the Preschool Child
78.	BSL 233	Foundations of Bilingual Education
79.	BSL 236	Multicultural Influences on Learning
80.	BSL 430	Language Learning and Literacy Development In Multilingual Students
81.	BSL 437	Spanish Fluency in the Bilingual Instructional Classroom
82.	BSL 477	Curriculum in Bilingual and Second Language Programs
83.	BSL 478	Teaching English As A Second Language

84. How would you rate the overall Sam Houston State University's Teacher Preparation Program in preparing you to teach?

Please return the completed survey in the envelope provided. Thank you for your time and commitment to education.

Margaret A. McGuire
509 S. Haswell Dr.
Bryan, Texas 77803

"I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A & M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Richard E. Miller, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at (979) 845-8585 (email: rich-miller@tamu.edu)."

"This project has been reviewed by Sam Houston State University's Committee For The Protection Of Human Subjects (phone: (936) 294-3621)."

APPENDIX C

SECOND REQUEST POST CARD

Dear Colleague,

Several weeks ago I sent you a survey packet concerning your experiences in the Sam Houston State Teacher Preparation Program. I have not received your survey back as yet.

I understand that your time is valuable, especially with Christmas right around the corner. However, I cannot proceed with my dissertation without your input. The survey results are the backbone of my research and without that, I will not graduate.

I would greatly appreciate your completing the survey as soon as possible. In case you have misplaced it, I will be sending out a second one to you at the end of next week.

Have a JOYOUS HOLIDAY.

Thank you,

Margaret A. McGuire

VITA

Margaret Ann McGuire
4513 Warwick Lane
Bryan, Texas 77802

EDUCATION:

2001 Doctor of Education, Educational Administration
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

1988 Masters of Education, Curriculum and Instruction
Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas

1975 Bachelor of Arts in Education, Early Childhood
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

CERTIFICATES:

K–8 Texas Teacher Certificate
Professional Mid-Management Certificate

EXPERIENCE:

1999–present	Instructor, Curriculum and Instruction Sam Houston State University
05/95 – 05/99	Coordinator, Child Development Center Bryan Independent School District, Bryan, Texas
08/94 – 05/95	Kindergarten Teacher Bryan Independent School District, Bryan, Texas
09/92 – 06/94	Kindergarten Teacher Onslow Country Public Schools, Jacksonville, North Carolina
08/89 – 06/92	Kindergarten and First Grade Teacher Orange Country Public Schools, Orlando, Florida
08/88 – 0689	Second Grade Teacher Stafford County Public Schools, Stafford, Virginia
08/85 – 07/88	Kindergarten Teacher Bryan Independent School District, Bryan, Texas
10/84 – 06/85	Chapter I Reading and Math Tutor Windward School District, Kaneohe, Hawaii
08/79 – 06/80	Kindergarten Teacher Virginia Beach Country Day School, Virginia Beach, Virginia
08/76 – 06/78	Kindergarten Teacher Camp Lejeune Schools, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina

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Organization/Address: Texas A&M Corpus Christi 6300 Ocean Dr ECDC 206 Corpus Christi, Tx. 78412	Telephone: 361 825-3327	FAX: 361 825-3301
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